

# JOSHUA

A NEW TRANSLATION  
WITH COMMENTARY



Joshua

A new translation with commentary



*"So then, quickly, cross the Yarden here—you and all the people here—to the land that I'm going to give to them [to the Yisra'elites]."*

*Frontispiece: The ford of the Jordan. Photograph by Francis Frith, 1859-1861. Public domain photograph from the Rijksmuseum, object number RP-F-F13016. Available at: [/https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-F-F13016](https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-F-F13016)*



# Joshua

A new translation with commentary

*Translated with comments by William Whitt*



Weatherford, Texas

First published in 2023  
by The Cutting Horse Press  
Weatherford, Texas

Typeset in pdf<sup>A</sup>TEX by the author  
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Print edition: ISBN 978-1-959487-00-5  
Digital edition: ISBN 978-1-959487-01-2

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# Translator's note to the reader

"Whoever wishes to translate, and purposes to render each word literally, and at the same time adhere slavishly to the order of the words and sentences in the original, will meet with much difficulty; his rendering will be faulty and untrustworthy. This is not the right method. The translator should first try to grasp the sense of the subject thoroughly, and then state the theme with perfect clearness in the other language. This, however, cannot be done without changing the order of words, putting many words for one word, or *vice versa*, and adding or taking away words, so that the subject be perfectly intelligible in the language into which he translates."

Moses Maimonides, *Letter to His Translator Samuel ibn Tibbon*

Cited from *Miscellany of Hebrew Literature*, vol. 1 (1872), p. 222.

This translation of the book of Joshua is part of a larger project that I have undertaken to translate the Torah and the Former Prophets—the first nine books of the Tanakh (or what Christians call the Old Testament).<sup>1</sup> These books, which present a history of the people who came to call themselves "Israel" and which begin with the world's creation and end with the destruction of Yahweh's temple in Jerusalem and the exile of the Judean elite to Babylonia, have indisputably had an outsized impact on human history. Through the act of their writing in the middle centuries of the first millennium BCE, their authors laid the groundwork for a new type of religion, one in which study of and adherence to "the book" ultimately displaced animal sacrifice as the primary avenue for humans to access the divine realm. These nine books, as they grew and came to take their current form over a period of centuries, provided a framework out of which the religion of Judaism emerged, and then, centuries later, shaped and inspired Christian theology. Yet despite these books' impact on human history, they are—with the possible exception of Genesis—barely read today.

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1 This book is the seventh I have translated. The others so far published are my translations of *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, *Deuteronomy*, and *Samuel*; all are freely available at the Internet Archive and on my [webpage](#) at [academia.edu](#).

One reason why they are unread is simply that most people today find them unreadable. This is true not only for the typical university-educated person, but even many devout Jews and Christians view them as such. One of the primary goals I have in this larger translation project, then, is to make these books readable—or at least less unreadable—for the modern-day audience.

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The book of Joshua tells the story of the Israelites' military conquest of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, followed by Joshua's apportionment of the entire land of Canaan to the Israelite tribes. Within the larger narrative of the Torah and the Former Prophets, the book of Joshua picks up where the two books that precede it, Numbers and Deuteronomy, leave off. At the opening of the book, the Israelites are preparing to cross the Jordan river after their lengthy wanderings in the desert wilderness. They are camped in the plains of Moab (where they were at the conclusion to Numbers), and their leader is now Joshua, who assumed this role from Moses shortly before the latter's death (events that are described near the end of Deuteronomy).

As one might deduce from the opening sentences of Joshua, the book has numerous connections to both Numbers and Deuteronomy. Indeed, Joshua has fundamental dependencies on both books and cannot be understood apart from them. For example, actions that are begun in Numbers—or actions for which the stage is set—are only completed in Joshua. The apportionment of land to the twelve tribes begins in Numbers with two-and-a-half tribes receiving land east of the Jordan river, and the apportionment of the land is completed in Joshua, with the remaining nine-and-a-half tribes receiving land in Canaan. Towards the end of Numbers, Yahweh gives instructions that the land must be apportioned to the tribes by lot, and then those instructions are carried out in the latter half of Joshua. Similarly, in Numbers, Moses gives instructions to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh regarding their obligation to assist in the conquest of Canaan, and then they deliver this assistance in the narrative of Joshua.

Joshua also has fundamental connections to Deuteronomy. While there are some narrative connections between the two books—and

while Joshua frequently makes allusions to the laws and precepts in Deuteronomy, and even alludes to the book of Deuteronomy itself—the influence of Deuteronomy can primarily be seen in how the authors of Joshua have structured their book and how they present their central message through the use of framing speeches. This influence is most clearly seen in the book’s first half, which describes the conquest of Canaan. A major theme of this material is that taking possession of the land successfully can only be achieved by being faithful to Yahweh and following his laws and commandments. This message is stated in clear and forceful terms in the first framing speech of the book—Yahweh’s speech to Joshua that begins the book (Josh 1.7):

“Indeed, you must be strong and show great courage, being sure to act in accord with the entirety of the Torah that my servant Moses commanded you—you mustn’t depart from it in any way, in order that you might have success in every place that you go.”<sup>2</sup>

For the authors of Joshua, “the Torah that Moses commanded” refers specifically to the book of Deuteronomy, which presents itself as a record of the treaty that Yahweh made with the Israelites in Moab and which lays out the treaty obligations in the form of rules and precepts that the Israelites must follow in order to fulfill the terms of the treaty.<sup>3</sup> It is these treaty obligations that the Israelites “mustn’t depart from in any way” if they are to have success in every place they go.

The other way that Joshua has a fundamental dependence on Deuteronomy is the authors’ use of the concept of the “ban devotion” (*herem* in Hebrew) as the organizing principle to describe the conquest of Canaan. The ban devotion seems to have been unique to the Yahwistic religion, although there are some parallels known from other

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2 The framing speech appearing near the book’s conclusion repeats this theme and applies the principle to the occupation of the land: “So you must remain firm in observing and doing everything written in Moses’ Torah scroll so as not to depart from it in any way at all, in order that you not go among those nations [*those that remain with you*] and that you not call on their gods’ names, neither swearing by them, nor doing service to them, nor worshipping them.”

3 For my views on Deuteronomy’s presentation of itself as a treaty document, see the [introductory comments](#) to my translation of that book.

ancient Near Eastern cultures.<sup>4</sup> The term *herem* can be applied to either people or things. When applied to things, it refers to an item that is “banned” from common use and “devoted” to Yahweh’s cult, where it may either be destroyed or become the property of the priests (see, for example, **Lev 27.28f**). When applied to people, *herem* refers specifically to the extermination of persons who have offended or are hostile to one’s god, often (but not always) followed by the “devotion” of the banned persons’ livestock and possessions by immolating them as a holocaust offering to the offended god. The clearest expression of this in the Tanakh is **Deut 13.13-17**:

“If in one of your towns which your god Yahweh is going to give you to live in, you hear the following report, ‘Some worthless men in your locality ventured out and urged on their town’s residents, saying ‘Come now, let’s make offerings to other gods whom you don’t know,’ you must examine this matter and investigate it, making a thorough inquiry. If you find that the report is true, it being established that such an abomination was carried out in your locality, then you must execute that town’s residents by the sword—you must devote [*h-r-m*] it and everything in it, including its livestock, to die by the sword. At the same time, you must gather together in the middle of the town plaza all the spoils from the town, and then you must burn down the town and all the spoils in it—they are whole offerings to your god Yahweh—so that it becomes a mound of ruins in perpetuity, never to be rebuilt.”

Given the ban devotion’s application to people who are hostile to one’s god, it is not surprising that the ban devotion frequently appears in military contexts. In **Num 21.2**, for example, the Israelites engage

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4 A full discussion of the concept of the *herem* in the Tanakh and the parallels from the ancient Near East can be found in “חֶרֶם *hāram*; חֶרֶם *hērem*” in G. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: 1974), pp. 180-199. It should be noted that the Mesha stele, which purports to be a stele of Moab’s king Mesha, mentions the ban devotion in a nearly identical way to its use in the Tanakh. However, I am convinced that the Mesha stele is a forgery and thus provides us with no genuine extra-biblical evidence of the ban devotion. For arguments against the authenticity of the Mesha stele, see A. Yehuda, “**The Story of a Forgery and the Mēša Inscription**,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 35, no. 2 (1944), pp. 139-164 and D. Ventura, “**The Mesha Stele: A Reappraisal of a Forgery**,” Figshare (2021).



in battle with the King of Arad and make a vow to Yahweh that if he delivers the king of Arad's people into their hands, they will make a ban devotion of that people's towns. Also noteworthy is the account of Saul's battle with the Amaleqites and its aftermath in [1 Sam 15](#). Prior to the battle, Samuel gives an oracle to Saul in which Yahweh demands that Saul make a ban devotion of Amaleq and everything its people possess, including livestock. After Saul defeats Amaleq, he puts the Amaleqite people to the ban devotion by slaughtering them, but he then enrages Yahweh when he does not also devote the Amaleqite king and all the livestock as Yahweh had ordered him to do. (It is Saul's failure to carry out the ban devotion of Amaleq in full that leads Yahweh to reject him as king.)

Twice in Deuteronomy, Moses tells the Israelites that when they take possession of Canaan, they must slaughter the native inhabitants and make a ban devotion of them. In the long preamble at the beginning of Deuteronomy, Moses gives the Israelites specific instructions about how to treat the native inhabitants of Canaan once they arrive in the land ([Deut 7.1f](#)):

"When your god Yahweh brings you into the land which you are entering to take possession of, he will clear out many peoples from your path—the Hethites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Kena'anites, the Perizzites, the Hiwwites, and the Yevusites—seven peoples stronger and more numerous than you. When your god Yahweh sets them before you, you must slaughter them and you must absolutely make a ban devotion of them."

Within the core body of laws and precepts in Deuteronomy, Moses gives the Israelites a lengthy set of rules for the conduct of warfare. These rules state that when the Israelites approach a town to attack it, they must first offer it terms for peace. But, Moses says, there is one exception—these rules don't apply to the battles that the Israelites will fight to take occupation of the land ([Deut 20.16ff](#)):

"However, with respect to the towns of those peoples whose lands your god Yahweh is going to give you as your own property, you mustn't spare any living soul. Indeed, you absolutely must make a ban devotion of them—the Hethites, the Amorites, the Kena'anites, the Perizzites, the Hiwwites, and the Yevusites—in order that they not teach you to perform abominable acts

similar to all those they do to honor their gods, and so cause you to wrong your god Yahweh.”

The authors of Joshua present their description of the conquest in exactly these terms. The battles that the Israelites fight against the Canaanite towns conclude with the slaughter of the towns’ entire populations, with the narrative in many places specifying that the Israelites made a ban devotion of their victims, “just as Yahweh commanded Moses”—an explicit reference to the passages in Deuteronomy quoted above. Indeed, the action in the conquest narrative is almost entirely driven by the concept of the ban devotion—so much so that it would be fair to describe the first half of the book as a narrative of the Israelites carrying out a genocide of the native inhabitants of Canaan and then burning their towns to the ground in fulfillment of Yahweh’s command to carry out the ban devotion. In every place the Israelites achieve victory, they exterminate the local population and put them to the ban devotion. In the one instance they are not victorious—at the town of Ai—it is because Yahweh punishes them for not completing the ban devotion of Jericho. And in the one instance in which they make peace with a local population—the Gibeonites—it is because the Gibeonites recognized that they themselves would be victims of the ban devotion unless they tricked the Israelites into making peace. It is especially noteworthy that the authors of Joshua present the Gibeonite trick in such a way that it conforms to the presentation of the ban devotion in Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy, the passage about the ban devotion states that the Israelites should only make peace “with towns that are very far from you,” and the Gibeonites trick the Israelites into thinking that they live very far away, outside Canaan’s borders. Thus, one can see that the conquest narrative in Joshua is fundamentally dependent on Deuteronomy and, in fact, cannot fully be understood apart from Deuteronomy.

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It goes without saying that the idea of the ban devotion is profoundly abhorrent to the modern ethical and moral sensibility. Moreover, using that idea to justify the genocide of whole populations of people whose only crime was worshipping the gods their ancestors had

worshipped—which is essentially the plot of the first half of Joshua—strikes people today, irrespective of their personal religious beliefs, as outrageous. That is to say, it is impossible to see a place in a modern-day religion for the portions of Joshua that tell of the conquest of Canaan. The eagerness with which the authors of Deuteronomy and Joshua embraced these ideas is indicative of just how large the gulf is between the ancient and modern sensibilities. In so many ways, the ancients were identical to us, or nearly so. But attitudes towards death and the value of life were vastly different, shaped by factors such as the high mortality rates of the time and the violence inherent in the (by our standards) undeveloped political and social structures of the early states. Moreover, in the absence of an empirically-based science, the ancients typically explained human events in terms of the gods' disagreements with one another and their anger or happiness with their human subjects. Against the background of such a world-view, it is possible to understand how intelligent humans might accept ideas such as the ban devotion and divinely-ordained genocide, but it is impossible to justify them today.

But the book of Joshua bothered some of the ancients as well. Indeed, as I suggest below, there is some evidence that less than two centuries after the earliest version of Joshua was written, there were important figures within Yahweh's cult who rejected the book, in part because they found its description of the conquest of Canaan unacceptable.

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Despite Joshua's connections to Numbers and Deuteronomy (both of which belong to the books of the Torah), most scholars today view the composition of Joshua as closely tied to the writing of the so-called Deuteronomistic History.<sup>5</sup> The composition of the Deuteronomistic

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5 The idea of a Deuteronomistic History—a (mostly) unified work consisting of the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings—was first proposed by the German scholar Martin Noth in 1942, and since then has served as a foundation for much scholarship on the Former Prophets. For a good overview of scholarly approaches to this work, see T. Römer, "[Deuteronomistic History](#)," EBR 6 (2013), cols. 648-653.

History has its background in the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of Yahweh's temple there in the early sixth century BCE—events which must have created a crisis of belief within southern Yahwism and the leadership of its cult. In seeking to come to terms with their circumstances, the leadership turned to the book of Deuteronomy, the earliest version of which likely was written some forty years before and which at the time was almost certainly the most important text in the temple library. And so the leadership of Yahweh's cult in the south came to understand the loss of the land and the destruction of the temple in terms of the treaty curses in Deuteronomy, which are imposed on those who fail to uphold the treaty obligations. The treaty thus became a lens through which to view the history of Israel and Judah, and the history of their peoples' relationship with Yahweh. In order to promulgate their views—and perhaps to prevent Yahweh's remaining devotees in the former land of Judah from abandoning him—the cult leadership wrote (or commissioned) a chronicle recording the history of Yahweh's relationship with his people that viewed this relationship in terms of the treaty obligations and curses in Deuteronomy. Scholars today call this work the “Deuteronomistic History,” and ascribe to it Deuteronomy (which was expanded and given a narrative framework for this project) and the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings.

While Deuteronomy belongs to the books of the Torah, the other books that scholars assign to the Deuteronomistic History—Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings—comprise the collection of books known in Jewish tradition as the Former Prophets. Compared with the other books of the Former Prophets, Joshua stands out for its many connections to the books of the Torah. And indeed, it is because of these connections that many scholars—myself included—believe Joshua was at some point in its history attached to the books of the Torah. Joshua's connections to the books of the Torah and its current place within the Former Prophets thus raise the question of how exactly it is related to both collections of books. And that question can only be answered through an examination of the book's composition history.

My views on Joshua's composition history—and how I explain its connections to the books of the Torah and the Former Prophets—are based on my views of the composition history of the Torah and Former Prophets that I have developed over the course of my translation

work over the past several years.<sup>6</sup> Thus before summarizing my understanding of Joshua's composition history, it is appropriate here to offer a sketch of my views on the composition history of the Torah and Former Prophets as a whole:<sup>7</sup>

(1) The starting point for my theory is the composition of the earliest version of Deuteronomy. Like many scholars, I believe this book was written in the 620s BCE by leaders in Yahweh's cult in Jerusalem in support of the cult reforms they implemented under King Josiah. In my theory, it is this earliest version of Deuteronomy that serves as

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6 As I discuss in more detail in my essay at the end of this book, the reconstruction of the composition history of the books of the Torah—or of any of the books of the Tanakh—is a wholly speculative endeavor. But even if we can never move beyond the realm of speculation, there is nonetheless value in the attempt to explain these books' composition history, for such efforts help sharpen our thinking about the complexities and inconsistencies in the material, and—most importantly—they can deepen our understanding of the text by offering plausible and historically-grounded explanations for these books' themes, structure, and content.

7 There is no consensus today among scholars regarding the composition history of the Torah. A good picture of the present state of scholarship can be seen in the articles in J. Gertz, B. Levinson, D. Rom-Shiloni, and K. Schmid (eds.), *The Formation of the Pentateuch: Bridging the Academic Cultures of Europe, Israel, and North America*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016.

My own views on the Torah's composition history have evolved considerably since undertaking this translation project. I studied under John Van Seters in graduate school more than thirty years ago, and my views at the beginning of this project certainly reflected his influence. Over the past six years of engaging with these texts as a translator, however, it has become overwhelmingly clear to me that approaches based on some version of the supplementary hypothesis do a far superior job of making sense of the material than approaches based on any of the various versions of the documentary hypothesis or of the fragmentary hypothesis. Current theories of the Torah's composition history remain inadequate in my view because they do not effectively address what I see as four fundamental problems related to its composition: (1) how it is that Jews and Samaritans share a common Torah; (2) why the so-called "non-priestly" material in the books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy has no fundamental connections to Genesis; (3) how it is that Leviticus (unlike Deuteronomy) both lacks a narrative structure and is not truly integrated into the surrounding narrative; and (4) why Joshua is itself not part of the Torah, yet has many fundamental connections to both "non-priestly" and "priestly" material within the Torah. The theory I have developed and summarize below does, I believe, provide plausible solutions to all four of these problems.

the kernel from which the Torah and Former Prophets grew and were shaped in the subsequent centuries.

(2) As discussed above, in the early decades of the sixth century BCE, the cult leadership in Judah commissioned a chronicle of the relationship between Yahweh and his people as a way to come to terms with the loss of the land and destruction of the temple. This chronicle, which scholars today call the Deuteronomistic History, explained the history of Yahweh's relationship with his people in terms of the treaty obligations and curses in Deuteronomy. This project involved the expansion of Deuteronomy and the composition of the earliest versions of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. It also involved—as I have argued in my other translations—the composition of the earliest version of Exodus-Numbers (which then was a single book).

(3) In the first decades of the Persian administration of Yehud (ca. 530s - 500s BCE), a number of Judah's leading families returned to Jerusalem from exile and began efforts to reestablish Yahweh's cult on Mount Zion. I believe it likely that at this time they sought the assistance of Yahweh's cult at Mount Gerizim in reestablishing their cult library. This partnership resulted in a decision to establish a shared set of documents that the leadership in both cult locations would manage together. As a result of these efforts, the Samaritans contributed an early version of Genesis<sup>8</sup> and the Yehudeans contributed a truncated version of the Deuteronomistic History (Exodus-Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua). I believe that the partnership between the leaders at Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion with respect to their mutually shared cult documents lasted for more than three centuries, and I thus view all compositional work on the books of the Torah from ca. 500 to ca. 200 BCE and the work on Joshua from ca. 500 to ca. 400 BCE to be a product of this partnership.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, in my view, this partnership

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8 I believe the earliest version of Genesis was composed in the late eighth or first half of the seventh century BCE as part of an effort by Yahweh's priests in Samaria to teach Arameans who had been resettled there about the local god Yahweh. At the time I translated Genesis (2019), I had not yet formed any strong ideas about the composition history of the Torah and thus treated the earliest version of the book as a product of Judean authors writing during the Babylonian exile.

9 There is a growing appreciation among scholars that the compositional and editorial activity on the books of the Torah during the Persian period may have

(which was not always a close one) is the central dynamic explaining the growth and expansion of the Torah and of Joshua during the Persian and Hellenistic periods, and I would argue that these books are best studied and understood through the lens of that partnership.

(4) Toward the end of the sixth century or very early in the fifth century BCE, I believe that the cult leaders in Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion decided to connect Genesis to the narrative of the truncated Deuteronomistic History. This project resulted in the composition of the Joseph narrative in Genesis, writing a new opening to Exodus, and the composition of the story of Balaq and Balaam in Numbers. The shared cult library at this time would have been Genesis, the book of Exodus-Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua. Each cult at this time must have retained numerous documents that were not part of this common project. At Mount Zion, this at a minimum would have included the other historical books (Judges, Samuel, and Kings), early versions of the books of the prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and parts of the Book of the Twelve), and large parts of the collections comprising the Psalms. At Mount Gerizim, I believe this included

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been the result of a cooperative effort between the priesthoods in the provinces of Samaria and Yehud. There is a substantial literature—too large to cite here—that examines the potential Samaritan contributions to the Torah and the extent to which there might have been cooperation between Samaria and Yehud. My own work has particularly benefited from the following studies, which provide a good entry point for exploring this issue: G. Knoppers, “**Parallel Torahs and Inner-Scriptural Interpretation: The Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs in Historical Perspective**,” in T. Dozeman, K. Schmid, and B. Schwartz (eds.), *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 507-531; T. Römer, “**Cult Centralization and the Publication of the Torah between Jerusalem and Samaria**,” in M. Kartveit and G. Knoppers (eds.), *The Bible, Qumran, and the Samaritans* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2018), 79-92; E. Nodet, “**Israelites, Samaritans, Temples, Jews**” in J. Zsengellér (ed.), *Samaria, Samaritans, Samaritans* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2013), 121-172; and B. Hensel, “**Debating Temple and Torah in the Second Temple Period: Theological and Political Aspects of the Final Redaction(s) of the Pentateuch**,” in M. Witte, J. Schröter, and V. Lepper (eds.), *Torah, Temple, Land: Constructions of Judaism in Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 27-49. For the friendly relations between the leaders of Yehud and Samaria, see L. Grabbe, “**The Reality of the Return: The Biblical Picture versus Historical Reconstruction**,” in J. Stökl and C. Waerzeggers (eds.), *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2015), 292-307.

a number of ancient cult rule books that today make up the core of Leviticus, as well as old collections of case law that make up the core legal material in Exodus.

(5) Across the decades of the fifth century BCE, the priesthoods in Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion significantly expanded their shared books.<sup>10</sup> To Exodus-Numbers, they added material that served as a foundation story for Yahweh's priesthood and the practice of his cult, and they added collections of old case law books that priests at Mount Gerizim used as references when adjudicating legal cases brought before them. They addressed theological questions of their day through the composition of new stories about the patriarchs, about primeval times, and about Moses; they also added much material to Deuteronomy in a reevaluation of the meaning of the treaty obligations owed to Yahweh and the associated blessings and curses. Furthermore, I believe that it was sometime during this century that the cult leaders at Mount Gerizim combined their old cult rule books into an early version of Leviticus; this version of Leviticus may have been shared with the cult at Mount Zion, but it remained an independent document that was not yet integrated into the other books of the Torah.

(6) In the last decades of the fifth century and the early decades of the fourth century, I believe there must have been a power struggle within Yahweh's cult that culminated in the Aaronides winning an exclusive hold on the priesthood. As a result of this power struggle, the Aaronide leadership at Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion composed and added much material to Exodus-Numbers to justify their new position. I believe it was also at this time that the two groups made the decision to integrate Leviticus into the collected books of the Torah; this involved splitting Exodus-Numbers into two separate books and adding much new material to Leviticus, including the expansion of old rule books with new rules and the descriptions of Aaron's installation rite and the rite for the day of atonement.

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10 In my theory, much of the material added to the Torah and to Joshua in this period corresponds to what other scholars refer to as "P" (or the priestly layer). I do not use the traditional scholarly terminology to describe this material because it ascribes a unity to this material that in my view is not present, and because it can be understood to imply that the authors of the "non-P" material were not closely associated with Yahweh's cult, which I think is demonstrably false.



(7) At approximately the same time—the early decades of the fourth century BCE—I believe the priesthood at Mount Gerizim significantly expanded Leviticus. These expansions represented a major evolution in their views about the nature of the land, which they came to see as an extension of the precincts of Yahweh’s shrine, and about the requirements for cultic purity.<sup>11</sup> In conjunction with their new theology of the land, they developed the view that the occupation of the land was a peaceful process. Because the native people’s abhorrent practices had defiled the land (i.e., Yahweh’s shrine precincts), the land “disgorged” them, and so the Israelites settled a land that was empty. It was this new theology of the land and the idea of a peaceful occupation of Canaan, I believe, that led the priesthood at Mount Gerizim to reject the book of Joshua and that prompted the decision of both priesthoods to detach Joshua from the books of the Torah. As a result of this decision, the shared books in their respective libraries were limited to Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—versions which by the last decades of the Persian period were close to the versions of the Samaritan Torah and the Jewish Torah that we have today.

(8) By the decades of the late Persian period and early Hellenistic period (ca. 350 - 300 BCE), the books of the Torah had been subjected to nearly two centuries of continual work and rework by the priestly leaders in Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim. These books accordingly came to be viewed as the authoritative texts for Yahwism, serving as a sort of constitution for the religion practiced by Yahweh’s devotees in both Yehud and Samaria. The edits and changes made to the books of the Torah in these decades thus reflected the authors’ understanding of these texts as the authoritative records of their religion’s history and practices. One primary motivation of the authors active in this period was to enhance the authority of the books of the Torah by

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11 In my theory, these expansions broadly correspond to the material that scholars refer to as the Holiness Code or “H.” I do not use this terminology because I believe it is misleading to describe this material as a “code” and also because it greatly oversimplifies the composition history of Leviticus. I see five composition layers in Leviticus, not just the two identified by most scholars. For my views on Leviticus’ composition history, see the [essay](#) on that topic in my translation of Leviticus.

incorporating additional stories and traditions that they believed to be ancient.<sup>12</sup> In addition, around this time the books of the Torah and the Prophets and many of the Writings likely began to circulate in Yahwistic communities in Egypt and Babylonia. With respect to the Torah, the diaspora communities must have had many questions about obscure terms and references and about confusing or unclear matters in the text, and they would have turned to the cult leaders at Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim for answers to their questions. As a result, much of the editorial work on the books of the Torah, the Prophets (including Joshua), and the Writings during this period was dedicated to adding comments and glosses to the text to address these questions. It should be noted that while the editorial work on the Torah must have been a joint effort between the leaders at Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion, the leaders at Mount Gerizim did not contribute to the editing of the Prophets or the Writings—this was done by the leadership at Mount Zion alone.

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It is against the background of the broad evolution of the books of the Torah and Former Prophets sketched above that I understand the composition history of Joshua.<sup>13</sup> Within the book of Joshua, I identify five major compositional layers. The earliest version of Joshua, as discussed above, is associated with the composition of the Deuteronomistic History in the early sixth century BCE. The focus of the narrative in this stage is the story of the conquest, the extermination of the native peoples through the ban devotion, and the division of land to the Israelite tribes. This stage presents the events in the book as the fulfillment of Yahweh's promises, and it portrays Joshua as a great leader who faithfully carries out the commands regarding the occupation of the land that were given by Yahweh in the book of Deuteronomy.

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12 I believe a similar dynamic was at work in the editing of the Prophets and the Writings during this period, although that work would have been carried out solely by authors associated with Yahweh's cult at Mount Zion.

13 For a full presentation of my views on the composition history of Joshua, see pages 141-168 below.

I view the next two layers—what I call the “second compositional stage” and “third compositional stage”—as being contemporaneous and as extending across most if not all of the fifth century BCE. These two stages represent the collaborative work of the priesthoods at Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim on the text of Joshua.<sup>14</sup> Although I believe that much of this work was truly a joint effort, it is often possible based on the content of these expansions and additions to assign the principal authorship to one of the two cult locations. The additions and expansions that I believe were made principally by priests at Mount Zion I assign to the second compositional stage, and the additions and expansions that I believe were made by priests at Mount Gerizim I assign to the third compositional stage. It was during these two stages that the book of Joshua was attached to the books of the Torah (which at this time would have consisted of Genesis, Exodus-Numbers, and Deuteronomy). Nearly all the editorial work on Joshua during this period reinforced and supported the editorial work made at the same time to the wilderness narrative in Exodus-Numbers and to Deuteronomy. Most noteworthy, as I discuss on the notes and comments below, the authors of these two stages also greatly expanded the role of Joshua, portraying him as a sort of “new Moses” who makes a new treaty between Yahweh and the Israelites and who gives the Israelites a new set of laws and precepts (the fifth century version of the Samaritan book of Leviticus).

There is only a small amount of material that I identify as belonging to the fourth compositional stage of Joshua.<sup>15</sup> This stage consists of a single story addressing the question of whether it is possible for a legitimate altar to Yahweh to exist outside Canaan. This story also represents a collaboration between the priesthoods at Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim (although the latter were likely the principal authors), and it was composed by the same individuals as those responsible for the “Aaronide” additions to Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. I believe that these authors added very little material to Joshua because they were the ones who made the subsequent decision to detach Joshua

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14 The work on these two stages of Joshua corresponds to the fifth stage of the larger framework for the Torah and Former Prophets presented above.

15 The work on this stage of Joshua corresponds to the sixth stage of the larger framework for the Torah and Former Prophets presented above.

from the books of the Torah. Once this happened, the Samaritans ceased their work on the book, and the book received no more major additions or expansions. In the fifth and final compositional stage of Joshua, the priesthood at Mount Zion added two brief stories and numerous comments, glosses, and harmonizations, thus giving the book the form it has today.<sup>16</sup>

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Modern translation theory speaks of two types of translation—translation that aims for “formal” equivalence and translation that aims for “functional” (or what is sometimes called “dynamic”) equivalence. Formal equivalence is concerned with fidelity to the text and aims to produce a translation that accurately reflects the meaning of the source text, preserving wherever possible word order and sentence structure, and seeking to maintain one-for-one correspondences in vocabulary. Robert Alter’s translation of the **Tanakh**, published in 2018, is an example of a translation that emphasizes formal equivalence over functional equivalence. By contrast, functional (or dynamic) equivalence is concerned with fluency; the aim here is to produce a natural-sounding translation that recreates for the reader the same experience of the text as that of a native speaker of the source language. Such a translation by necessity breaks with one-to-one correspondences in vocabulary and word order in order to express a specific thought or idea in the most natural way in the target language.

From antiquity, one of the fundamental debates among translators has been whether translations should strive for formal equivalence or for functional equivalence. The early Church father Jerome, who spent the better part of two decades writing the Vulgate (the first Latin translation of the Christian Old and New Testaments), discusses this issue at length in his “**Letter to Pammachius on the Best Method of Translating**.” Although Jerome believed that Bible translations should aim for formal equivalence (because of the divine inspiration of the text), he argues that for all other texts functional equivalence is the

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16 The work on this stage of Joshua corresponds to the eighth stage of the larger framework for the Torah and Former Prophets presented above.

superior method of translation. Thus, he says, he translates “sense for sense and not word for word.” He then develops this argument in detail by quoting passages from Cicero and Horace in which they argue in favor of what we today call functional equivalence.<sup>17</sup>

Today, outside translators of the Bible, the debate has largely been settled in favor of functional equivalence. With translations of the Bible into English, however, it is a different story. Perhaps because of the undue influence of the King James translation (which emphasized formal equivalence), or perhaps out of the (conscious or unconscious) belief that the exact Hebrew and Greek words in the Tanakh and the Christian New Testament are divinely inspired, many English-language translators of the Bible employ approaches that strive for formal equivalence and that reject functional equivalence outright.

I began this note with an epigraph from Moses Maimonides on the translator’s task because it sums up succinctly the technique that I believe produces the most successful translations. Along with Maimonides, I come down firmly on the side of functional equivalence. In this and my other translations, I have put special effort into trying to convey the authors’ meaning in natural English—in particular, I have written what I imagine the authors would have written had they been native speakers of modern-day English. My priorities are always to try to express the ideas in the text in the most natural way in English, and at the same time to capture the energy and rhythm of the original. When a Hebrew passage is awkwardly phrased, repetitive, or confusing, the English translation should reflect that; likewise, when a

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17 Cicero’s comments are excellent and are worth quoting at length: “I have translated the noblest speeches of the two most eloquent of the Attic orators. . . I have rendered them not as a translator, but as an orator, keeping the sense but altering the form by adapting the metaphors and the words to suit our own idiom. I have not deemed it necessary to render word for word but I have reproduced the general style and emphasis. I have not supposed myself bound to pay the words out one by one to the reader but only to give him an equivalent in value.” And “I shall be well satisfied if my rendering is found, as I trust it will be, true to this standard. In making it I have utilized all the excellences of the originals, I mean the sentiments, the forms of expression and the arrangement of the topics, while I have followed the actual wording only so far as I could do so without offending our notions of taste. If all that I have written is not to be found in the Greek, I have at any rate striven to make it correspond with it.”

passage is written in a fluid or a highly literary style in the original, the English translation should be written that way as well.

Hebrew is very different from English—its vocabulary is limited, it is sparing in its use of particles and adverbs, its sentence structure and verb tenses are simpler, and the logical connections between successive sentences or actions are typically implied and rarely expressed as explicitly as in English. Translations which carry over these features into English—as translations that aim for formal equivalence inevitably must—produce a wooden, lifeless prose (or poetry) that fails to do justice to the energy and vibrancy of the original Hebrew. In this and my other translations, bringing the Hebrew over into natural English and prioritizing functional equivalence have required me to break significantly from literal renderings in nearly every sentence. I have frequently added particles and adverbs, inserted logical connections where lacking, omitted words that are superfluous in translation, introduced word variety consistent with English usage, altered verb tenses and pronouns, changed word order, and, on occasion, added short phrases and clarifying clauses when needed to produce natural English. Following Maimonides' advice to his own translator quoted in the epigraph above, I have relied on my understanding of the text and of what I believed to be the authors' intent to guide my many departures from the literal text. My goal in the translation here was always to be faithful to the ideas that the authors of Joshua were expressing in Hebrew—but to express those ideas in English in the most natural way.

One final comment about my approach to translation: in translating names of people and places, I have not employed the traditional anglicized spelling, but have chosen instead to use transliterations that approximate how scholars believe ancient Hebrew was pronounced. Thus, I write Yehoshua rather than Joshua, Mosheh instead of Moses, and Yisra'el in place of Israel. One other unusual feature of my translation of names is that I have chosen in many places to replicate one of the principal quirks of Hebrew spelling: the consonantal letters *yodh* ("y") and *he* ("h") that are sometimes used to indicate specific vowels. In Joshua, this results in my writing Naphtaliy rather than Naphtali, and Mosheh instead of Moshe. With respect to place names (which are numerous in Joshua), I sometimes translate the name into an English equivalent if it sounds natural in English rather than sim-

ply reproduce the Hebrew name. Thus, I write Gad’s Tower rather than Migdal Gad, and Saltville instead of Iyr-HamMelah. Such an approach to translating personal names and place names, I believe, removes much of the theological baggage that many of the Biblical personal names and place names have taken on over the centuries, thus helping modern-day readers look at the text with fresh eyes.

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One place where I make a major departure from nearly all other present-day English translations of the Tanakh is that I do not follow the familiar chapter divisions, which are based on a scheme introduced by Archbishop of Canterbury Stephen Langton in the thirteenth century CE. Rather, my translations follow the division of the text into literary units—or *parashot*—as preserved in the Masoretic traditions. We know that most of the *parashot* in the Masoretic text reflect very ancient traditions, for they agree broadly with textual divisions found in the Biblical texts that were recovered from Qumran and that date between the third century BCE and the first century CE.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the *parashot* are marked in an identical fashion in the Masoretic text and in the texts from Qumran—space breaks where the text resumes in the middle of a line are used to indicate the beginning of smaller literary units, and space breaks where the text resumes at the beginning of a new line are used to indicate the beginning of major literary units. The general agreement of the *parashot* in the texts from Qumran with the Masoretic text can be seen in numerous textual fragments from Qumran, but it is most easily and convincingly seen in a simple visual comparison of the *parashot* in the **Great Isaiah Scroll** from Qumran and the Book of Isaiah in the **Aleppo Codex** and the **Leningrad Codex**.

[/http://dss.collection.s.imj.org.il/isaiah](http://dss.collection.s.imj.org.il/isaiah)

Although the evidence from Qumran clearly demonstrates that the *parashot* have ancient roots, that is of little help in answering the

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18 For detailed discussions of this topic, see the articles by E. Tov: “**The Background of the Sense Divisions in the Biblical Texts**,” in M. Korpel and J. Oesch (eds.), *Delimitation Criticism: A New Tool in Biblical Research*, Pericope 1 (Assen 2001), 312-350 and “**Sense divisions in the Qumran texts, the Masoretic text, and ancient translations of the Bible**,” in J. Krosovec (ed.), *Interpretation of the Bible: International symposium on the interpretation of the Bible* (Sheffield 1998), 121-146.

questions of how old they are and whether they might have been part of the earliest “editions” of the books of the Tanakh. It is of course impossible to answer these questions definitively, but it is reasonable to suppose that the ultimate source for most of the *parashot* might indeed be the original composition itself. We know, for example, that textual divisions were regularly employed in ancient texts.<sup>19</sup> And perhaps more important, once the medieval chapter divisions are stripped away and the *parashot* highlighted, it is striking to see how the *parashot* contribute to and enhance the flow of the narrative. I have seen this in all the translations that I have completed to date—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Samuel.

Because the *parashot* are sometimes employed in ways that modern-day readers do not expect, it is worth providing some comments on their usage in the Tanakh. There are two types of *parashot*—the *parashah petuhah* (or “open *parashah*”) typically marks the beginning of a major literary unit, while the *parashah setumah* (or “closed *parashah*”) typically marks the beginning of a smaller literary unit.

In Joshua, as elsewhere in the Tanakh, both the *parashah petuhah* and the *parashah setumah* are frequently used to indicate a change in compositional layer, a change in the author’s source material, a change of subject matter, or a change of scene. Both types of *parashot* are also used to draw attention to important speeches and to alter the pace of the narrative for dramatic effect. In addition, both types of *parashot* are often used to organize related content and to facilitate the reader’s navigation of repetitive text. The best example of this in Joshua is the material in Jos 10.28-39, which uses both *parashot setumot* and *parashot petuhot* to break up the repetitive narrative describing the capture and slaughter of the towns in southern Canaan. Finally, two special uses of the *parashah setumah* are to separate items in a list and to separate lines of songs. In the list of the thirty-one kings in Jos 12.9-24, for example, *parashot setumot* are used before and after the name of each king and the numeral “one.”

In my translation, I have indicated the *parashot petuhot* with a triple line break and a double asterisk (\*\*), while I have indicated the *parashot*

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19 For examples predating the biblical texts, see those cited in E. Tov, “[Background of the Sense Divisions](#),” pp. 334f.



*setumot* with a single line break and an em-dash (—). Because I find the Aleppo Codex to be superior overall to the Leningrad Codex, the *parashot* in my translation follow it and not the Leningrad Codex.

As a convenience to readers, I have noted the Masoretic literary units (the “open” and “closed” *parashot*) and the familiar chapter divisions of the Christian Bible in the margins of my translation. Although the Masoretes did not number the *parashot*, I have taken the liberty of numbering them in order to make it easier for readers to keep track of their place in the text, and to move back and forth between the text and the notes and comments. In the margins of the translation, I indicate the *parashot petuhot* with the prefix “P” followed by a number (P1, P2, P3, etc.). In my numbering system, I treat the *parashot setumot* as subunits of the *parashot petuhot*—thus P7,1 and P7,2, for example, indicate the first and second “closed” *parashot* after P7. In addition, I indicate the more familiar chapter divisions by placing the chapter number within brackets—for example, [Ch. 24] denotes Joshua 24. Lastly, I also use the margins to indicate places in the text that are discussed in the notes and comments that follow the translation; for each *parashah*, these are marked in lowercase letters—a, b, c, etc.—and are hyper-linked in the pdf version of this book.

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The book of Joshua offers its readers a fascinating window into the growth and development of the books of the Torah and the Former Prophets. Since the mid-twentieth century, the idea of the Deuteronomistic History—a project conceived by leaders of Yahweh’s cult in Jerusalem to explain the history of Yahweh’s relationship with his people in terms of the treaty obligations and curses found in Deuteronomy—has provided the framework for most scholars’ work on Joshua and the other books of the Former Prophets. But Joshua also has many fundamental connections to Deuteronomy and Numbers. Indeed, the narrative and themes of Joshua are so intertwined with those two books that it cannot be understood apart from them. Joshua’s relationship to Deuteronomy and Numbers is one of several important pieces of evidence that suggest the traditional view of the Deuteronomistic History should be expanded to include, as I have

argued elsewhere, Exodus and Numbers.<sup>20</sup>

Of the books associated with the Deuteronomistic History, Joshua is especially interesting because it was attached to the books of the Torah for much of its early history before being removed—likely because of its problematic conquest narrative—and relegated to the Former Prophets. Signs of the book’s editorial history are scattered through the text, and attentive readers can discern a base narrative belonging to the earliest version of the Deuteronomistic History, as well as expansions and additions made by the same authors who also contributed much material to Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The book of Joshua thus bridges both the Torah and the Former Prophets. It is my hope that through my work here—both in the translation that strives to express the ancient authors’ ideas in natural modern-day English and in the notes and comments that follow—readers may gain a deeper appreciation of the book’s growth and evolution, and of the complex way in which both the Torah and the Former Prophets as we know them today grew out of the original Deuteronomistic History.

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20 A key proof point of this argument is that the narrative of Joshua assumes that of Numbers, and the narrative of Numbers assumes that of Joshua. This is only comprehensible if both books were composed at the same time as part of the same larger project. Neither the traditional view, which sees the “Tetrateuch” as predating the Deuteronomistic History, nor the popular modern-day view, which argues that the Deuteronomistic History preceded the Tetrateuch, offer satisfactory explanations of the mutual dependence of Numbers and Joshua on each other.

Joshua

יהושע



AFTER MOSHEH YAHWEHSSERVANT DIED, Yahweh spoke to Mosheh's attendant Yehoshua Nunsson. "My servant Mosheh is dead," he said. "So then, quickly, cross the Yarden here—you and all the people here—to the land that I'm going to give to them [*to the Yisra'elites*]. Every place where the soles of your feet step I have given to you, just as I said to Mosheh. The boundaries of your land will extend from the desert and the Levanon here as far as the Great River [*the River Perath*] (the entire country of the Hethites) and as far as the Great Sea to the west. No man will challenge your position for as long as you live—I will be with you just as I was with Mosheh; I won't let you down and I won't abandon you. So be strong and have courage! For you shall give this people possession of the land that I promised their ancestors I would give to them. Indeed, you must be very strong and show great courage, being sure to act in accord with the entirety of the Torah that my servant Mosheh commanded you—you mustn't depart from it in any way, in order that you might have success wherever you go. This Torah scroll must never leave your lips—you must recite it day and night in order that you be sure to act in accord with everything written in it. For then you will prosper in what you undertake to do, then you will have success! Take assurance that I've enjoined you to be strong and have courage! Don't be afraid and don't be dismayed, for your god Yahweh will be with you wherever you go!"

P1 [Ch. 1] a

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"Cross through the camp," Yehoshua directed the people's leaders, "and give the people this order: 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for in another three days you're going cross the Yarden here, in order to go and take possession of the land that your god Yahweh is going to give you as your possession.'"

P2 a

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P3 a Yehoshua then addressed the Re'ubenites and Gadites and half the  
b tribe of Menashsheh: "Remember what Mosheh Yahwehsservant com-  
c manded you when he said that your god Yahweh would let you settle  
down and give you this land here. Your women and children and  
livestock should stay behind in the land that Mosheh gave you, in the  
d region east of the Yarden; but you yourselves must cross in advance of  
your kinsmen, organized in fifty-man battalions—all of you excellent  
warriors—and support them in battle. Until the time when Yahweh  
lets your kinsmen settle down (as he let you) and they too take pos-  
session of the land that your god Yahweh is going to give them—only  
e then may you return to the land reserved for you and take possession  
of it, the land that Mosheh Yahwehsservant gave you in the region  
opposite the Yarden, to the east."

"We shall do everything that you've commanded us!" they replied.  
"And we shall go wherever you send us! Just as we obeyed Mosheh, so  
f we shall obey you—we know Yahweh will be with you just as he was  
with Mosheh! Let any man who defies your orders, or who doesn't  
obey your instructions with respect to anything you command him to  
g do, be put to death! Only, be strong and have courage!"

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P4 [Ch. 2] a From the Yisra'elites' camp in Shittiyim Yehoshua Nunsson sent out  
two men on a secret mission, telling them to go scout the region and  
also the town of Yeriho. The men went off and along the way they  
came to the home of a prostitute named Rahav, where they spent the  
night.

Around this time the king of Yeriho was informed that some men  
believed to be Yisra'elites had arrived there overnight intending to  
scout out the region. So the king sent the following message to Rahav:  
"Turn over the men who came to you, who entered your home, for  
they've come to scout out the region." (But the woman took the two  
men and hid them.)

"Yes, it's true those men did come into my house," she replied  
b to the king's messengers, "but I didn't know where they were from.  
c Anyway, the men already left, as they knew the town gate was going

to be shut at dark. I don't know where they went. But hurry and go after them, for you can still catch up to them!"

Now she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them among the stalks of flax that had been set out for her to dry on the roof. (Meanwhile, the king's men chased after them down the Yarden Road near the river's fords, the town gate having been shut immediately after they left in pursuit of them.) The two men had not yet lain down when she went up to the roof to speak with them.

"I know that Yahweh has given you this country," she said. "Indeed, we're consumed with fear over you and all the country's inhabitants are truly terrified at the thought of your arrival! For we heard about how Yahweh dried up the waters of the Reed Sea right in front of you after you left Egypt and what you did to two of the Amorites' kings in the region across the Yarden—Siyhon and Og, whom you slaughtered and put to the ban devotion. When we heard that, our willpower simply melted away—no one has the will any more to challenge you, for your god Yahweh is supreme in the skies above and on earth below. So then, I beg you, swear to me by Yahweh that, because I treated you kindly, you also will treat my family with kindness! And you must give me a sure token that you'll let my father and mother and my brothers and sisters live, and all who belong to them, and save us from death!"

"So long as you don't inform anyone about our purpose here," the men pledged, "we would even be willing to die for you and your family. And when Yahweh gives us this country, we will treat you with kindness and honesty."

Then she lowered them through the window with a rope (for her house was in the town wall, and she lived inside the wall). "Go into the mountains," she advised them, "lest the men pursuing you come upon you. You ought to hide there for three days, until those pursuing you return. After that you can continue on your way."

"But know that in certain circumstances," the men said to her, "we'll be released from that oath that you had us swear to you. Take note: when we enter the country, you must tie this red string in the window through which you just lowered us. At the same time, you must gather your father and mother and your siblings—your entire family—inside your home. But should anyone exit the doors of your house and go outside, it will be his fault if he dies, and we'll be

blameless. However, as for any who remain with you in your house, we will bear the guilt if anyone so much as lays a hand on them. But if you report what we are doing here, then we'll be free from the oath that you had us swear to you."

"It will be just as you say!" she replied. She then sent them off, and as they went on their way, she tied a red string in the window.

The men travelled on and went into the mountains, where they remained for three days until those pursuing them had returned. Their pursuers looked for them along the entire length of the road, but found nothing. The two men then returned, coming down out of the mountains and crossing the river, and reported back to Yehoshua Nunsson, relating to him everything that had happened to them. 1 They concluded by telling Yehoshua that Yahweh had given the entire country into the Yisra'elites' possession, and moreover, that all the country's inhabitants were terrified of them.

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P4,1 [Ch. 3] Yehoshua got an early start the next morning. He and all the Yisra'elites broke camp at Shittiyim and travelled as far as the Yarden, where they spent the night before crossing over. At the end of the third day, the Yisra'elites' leaders passed through the camp and gave orders to the people.

a b "When you see your god Yahweh's treaty chest, which the Lewite priests will be carrying," they said, "you must set out from your current position and follow it. However, there should be a good c distance between you and it—a space of about two thousand cubits. d Don't get too close to it, so that you might become acquainted with the road you'll be travelling on, for you've never passed down this road before."

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P5 a "Consecrate yourselves," Yehoshua announced to the people, "for tomorrow Yahweh will do wondrous deeds in your presence!"

"Pick up the treaty chest," Yehoshua ordered the priests, "and cross over to the front of the people!" And so they picked up the treaty chest and proceeded to the front of the people.

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P5,1 a "Today is the day that I begin to make you great in the eyes of all Yisra'el," Yahweh said to Yehoshua. "They shall see that I will be



with you just as I was with Mosheh. Now, you must order the priests who are carrying the treaty chest that when they arrive at the edge of Yarden's waters, they must stand in the Yarden."

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"Come here," Yehoshua said to the Yisra'elites. "Hear what your god Yahweh has said: [*"This," Yehoshua said, "is how you shall know the living god is among you: he will drive out from your path the Kena'anites, the Hethites, the Hiwwites, the Perizzites, the Gergashites, the Amorites, and the Yevusites."*] 'Take note, the [*treaty*] chest of the lord of the entire earth is going to cross in front of you into the Yarden. [*So then, select for yourselves twelve men from Yisra'el's tribes, one man from each tribe.*] Now when the priests carrying the chest belonging to Yahweh, lord of all the earth, rest the soles of their feet in the Yarden's waters, the waters of the river will be cut off—that is, the water coming down from upstream—and the waters will stand in one gigantic heap.'"

And so, when the people set out from their tents to cross the Yarden, the priests carrying the [*treaty*] chest were in front. When those carrying the chest arrived at the Yarden—that is, when the feet of the priests carrying the chest stepped into the edge of the water [*at the time, the Yarden had been overflowing its banks for the entirety of the harvest*—the waters coming from upstream stopped, piling up into one gigantic heap for quite a distance, as far back as Adam (the town that is next to Tzarethan). Thus the downstream flow towards the Desert Steppe Sea [*that is, the Salt Sea*] came to end, being completely cut off, and the people crossed over in front of Yeriho.

And so the priests carrying the [*Yahweh's treaty*] chest stood on dry ground, fixed in position in the middle of the Yarden while the whole of Yisra'el crossed over on dry ground, standing there until the entire nation had finished crossing the Yarden.

As soon as the nation had finished crossing the Yarden. . .

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"You all must select for yourselves twelve men from the people," Yahweh said to Yehoshua, "one man per tribe, and give them the following orders: 'From this spot here—from the middle of the Yarden, from the

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[Ch. 4] i

P7

a place where the priests have fixed their feet—pick twelve stones for yourselves and take them over with you, and then set them down at the campsite where you spend the night tonight.’”

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P7,1 a Yehoshua then summoned the twelve men who had been appointed from the Yisra’elites (one man from each tribe). “Pass in front of your god Yahweh’s chest to the middle of the Yarden,” he said to them, “and each of you pick up one stone to put on your shoulder to match the number of the Yisra’elites’ tribes, in order that this be a sign for  
b c you wherever you are: so that in the future when your children ask what these stones mean to you, you may tell them how the Yarden’s  
d waters were cut off because of Yahweh’s treaty chest, how when it crossed into the Yarden, the Yarden’s waters were cut off. And so these stones will serve as a memorial for the Yisra’elites, for all time.”

The Yisra’elites did just as Yehoshua commanded them: they picked up twelve stones from the middle of the Yarden, just as Yahweh had told Yehoshua to have them do—matching the number of the Yisra’elites’ tribes—and then they took them with them to the place  
e they camped for the night and set them down there. [*At the same time, Yehoshua stood up twelve other stones in the middle of the Yarden, in the place where the priests carrying the treaty chest had planted their feet, and there they have remained down to the present day.*]

The priests carrying the chest remained standing in the middle of the Yarden until the completion of everything that Yahweh had  
f commanded Yehoshua to say to the people (in keeping with everything that Mosheh had commanded Yehoshua), whereupon the people quickly crossed over. Then, as soon as all the people had finished crossing, Yahweh’s chest and the priests crossed over to the front of the people.

The Re’uvenites and Gadites and half the tribe of Menashsheh then moved to the front of the Yisra’elites in fifty-man companies,  
g exactly as Mosheh had told them to. Approximately forty thousand  
h i men dressed in their battle gear passed by in front of Yahweh toward the plains of Yeriyo, ready to fight.

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P7,2 a On that day Yahweh made Yehoshua preeminent in the Yisra’elites’  
b eyes, and for his entire life they respected him just as they had respected Mosheh.

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“Command the priests carrying the treaty chest to come up from the Yarden,” Yahweh said to Yehoshua. P8 a

“Come up from the Yarden!” Yehoshua ordered the priests.

As the priests carrying Yahweh’s treaty chest came up out of the Yarden, with each step the soles of their feet lifted up and landed on dry ground, while the Yarden’s waters flowed back to their usual place, extending as previously onto all the banks of the river. b

The people came up out of the Yarden on the tenth day of the first month and then made camp at Gilgal at the eastern edge of Yeriyo. At that time Yehoshua placed the twelve stones that they had taken from the Yarden in a standing position there in Gilgal. c

“In the future, when your descendants ask their fathers what these stones signify,” he said to the Yisra’elites, “you’ll tell your descendants that Yisra’el crossed the Yarden on dry ground, that your god Yahweh dried up the Yarden’s waters, keeping them away from you until you had crossed over, just as your god Yahweh did to the Reed Sea when he dried it up and kept it away from us until we had crossed through—so that all peoples on earth might understand Yahweh’s power and how mighty it is, so that you might always fear your god Yahweh.” d

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Now when the Amorites’ kings who lived in the region west of the Yarden and the Kena’anites’ kings who lived beside the sea heard that Yahweh had dried up the Yarden’s water, keeping it away from the Yisra’elites until they crossed over, their courage melted away and they no longer had any desire to challenge the Yisra’elites. e

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“Make some knives of flint,” Yahweh said at that time to Yehoshua, “and circumcise the Yisra’elites again a second time.” So Yehoshua made some flint knives and circumcised the Yisra’elites at Foreskin Hill. P9 [Ch. 5] a

Here is the account of Yehoshua’s circumcision of all the people who left Egypt: the males—specifically, all the men of fighting age— b

d died along the way in the desert after they left Egypt, for everyone who  
left Egypt was circumcised, whereas no one born on the way in the  
desert after they left Egypt was ever circumcised. For the Yisra'elites  
travelled through the desert for forty years until the entire nation  
(that is, the men of fighting age who left Egypt) was no more, because  
e they didn't obey Yahweh, as a result of which Yahweh swore to them  
f that he would never let them see the land that Yahweh promised  
g their ancestors he would give to us—a land overflowing with milk  
and honey. And so he replaced them with their children. It was  
these individuals whom Yehoshua circumcised, for they still had  
their foreskins, as no one had circumcised them during their desert  
journeys.

Now when the entire nation had finished being circumcised, they  
remained where they were in camp until they recovered.

\*\*

P11 a "Today," Yahweh said to Yehoshua, "I have rolled Egypt's foulness off  
Gilgal: "Rillroll" you." And so the name of that place has been called Gilgal down to  
the present day. The Yisra'elites camped at Gilgal and observed the  
Passover in the evening on the fourteenth of the month in the plains of  
Yeriyho. They ate some of the land's produce the day after Passover—  
b flat bread and dried grain—on that very day. The *man* stopped on  
the following day, after they ate some of the land's produce. The  
Yisra'elites never had *man* again; rather, that year the food they ate  
came from Kena'an's crops.

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P11,1 Now it happened that while Yehoshua was at Yeriyho, he looked into  
the distance and noticed a man standing in front of him with a drawn  
sword in his hand. Yehoshua went over to him and asked, "Are you  
on our side, or with our enemies?"

a "No," he replied. "I'm the head of Yahweh's army. I've come here  
now to help."

b Yehoshua threw himself flat on the ground and prostrated himself.

c "What is my lord saying to his servant?" he asked.

d "Remove your sandals from your feet," the head of Yahweh's army  
e said, "for the ground that you're standing on is holy ground." And so  
f Yehoshua did as he was told.

Now Yeriyyho was shut and closed off from the Yisra'elites—it was impossible for anyone to leave or enter. . .

[Ch. 6]

g

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“Take note,” Yahweh said to Yehoshua, “I have given Yeriyyho and its king—valiant warriors—into your hands. You should march around the town with all the men of fighting age, making a full circuit of the town just one time. You should do this for six days, with seven priests carrying seven ram’s horns in front of the chest. Then on the seventh day you must march around the town seven times while the priests blow on the ram’s horns. And when they give a sustained blast on the ram’s horns—when you all hear the sound of the horn—all the people must give out a tremendous shout. Then the town’s wall will collapse in place and the people can charge straight into the town.”

P11,2

a

Yehoshua Nunsson summoned the priests. “Proceed with the treaty chest,” he said to them, “with seven priests proceeding with seven rams’ horns in front of Yahweh’s chest.” Turning to the people, he said: “Cross by and march around the town, with those armed for battle going in front of Yahweh’s chest.”

b

c

It happened that as soon as Yehoshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven rams’ horns in front of Yahweh passed by—they were blowing on the horns and Yahweh’s treaty chest was travelling behind them. All those dressed in their battle gear were walking in front of the priests blowing the horns, while the rearguard were walking behind the chest and blowing constantly on rams’ horns as they went.

d

“Don’t shout and don’t say anything,” Yehoshua ordered the people. “Don’t let a peep come from your mouths until the time when I tell you to shout out—then you must give a loud shout.”

e

Yahweh’s chest circled the town, making one circuit, and then they entered camp and spent the night there in camp.

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Yehoshua made an early start in the morning. The priests picked up Yahweh’s chest, and the seven priests carrying the seven rams’ horns in front of Yahweh’s chest started walking, constantly blowing on their horns as they walked, while all those in their battle gear walked in front of them; meanwhile the rearguard walked behind Yahweh’s

P12

chest, constantly blowing on rams' horns. They circled the town on the second day a single time and then returned to camp. So they did for six days.

On the seventh day, they started early—just as dawn was breaking—and circled the town like they usually did, but for seven times. (Only on that day did they circle the town seven times.)

Then, when they were on the seventh circuit, the priests blew on the horns and Yehoshua cried to the people, "Shout out, for Yahweh has delivered the town to you! The town shall be made a ban devotion, and everything in it will be Yahweh's! Only Rahav the prostitute may live—she and all those with her in her house—for she hid the men we sent to scout the region. All of you, however, be careful with the devoted items, lest when you participate in the devotion you take some of the banned goods, thus making a banned thing of Yisra'el's camp and causing trouble for it. All silver and gold, and all copper and iron items shall be consecrated to Yahweh—they should go to Yahweh's treasury."

The people gave out a great shout—the horns sounded, and when the people heard the sound of the horn, they gave out a great cry. The town wall collapsed in place and the people ran straight into town. And so they captured the town. They made a ban devotion of everything in the town—men and women, young and old, and cattle, sheep and asses—putting it all to the sword.

"Go to the prostitute's house," Yehoshua said amidst the commotion to the two men who had scouted the region. "Get that woman and all her family members out of there, just as you swore to her you would do." The agents who had carried out the scouting mission then went into the town and brought out Rahav and her father and mother, along with her siblings and all the other members of her family—they brought out her entire family and found a safe place for them outside Yisra'el's camp. Meanwhile, the people had set fire to the town and everything in it (except for the silver and gold and the copper and iron items—they put those in the treasury in Yahweh's temple).

And so Yehoshua spared Rahav the prostitute and her family and everyone related to her. She and her family have lived in Yisra'el down to the present day, for she hid the agents whom Yehoshua had sent to scout Yeriyo.

“May the man who comes and rebuilds this town Yeriyo be cursed in front of Yahweh,” Yehoshua swore that day. “When he lays its foundation, it will cost him his first-born—and when he installs its gate doors, it will cost him his youngest.”

P13 a  
b

—  
Yahweh was with Yehoshua, and his fame reached every part of the land. The Yisra’elites, however, had committed treachery with respect to the ban devotion—Akan Karmiysson Zavdiysson Zerahsson of the tribe of Yehudah took some of the ban devotion for himself, thus enraging Yahweh against the Yisra’elites...

c  
P13,1 a  
[Ch. 7]

—  
Yehoshua sent some men from Yeriyo to Ay, which abuts Beyth Awen (just east of Beyth-El), telling them to go and scout the region. So the men went and scouted the area around Ay.

b  
P13,2

“Not all our forces need to go,” they said to Yehoshua upon their return. “About two thousand men, or maybe three thousand, could go and defeat Ay. Don’t wear our forces out by sending them there, for its population is small.”

a

So a fraction of the armed forces—approximately three thousand men—went there, but they fled from Ay’s men. Ay’s forces killed perhaps three dozen men, pursuing them in front of the gate as far as the quarries and striking them down on the hillsides. As a result, the courage of the Yisra’elites’ forces melted and turned to water.

b

Yehoshua tore his clothes and threw himself flat on the ground in front of Yahweh’s chest, remaining there until evening—he along with Yisra’el’s elders—and heaping dirt on their heads.

c

“Alas, Yahweh my lord,” cried Yehoshua, “why did you make this people cross the Yarden, only to deliver us into the Amorites’ hands and destroy us? Oh, how I wish we had chosen to remain in the region across the Yarden! Please, my lord, what should I think after Yisra’el turned tail from its enemies? Should the Kena’anites or any others living in the land hear of this, they’ll turn against us and wipe out all memory of us from this land—and then what will you do for your great name?”

d

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f  
g

“Get off the ground!” Yahweh ordered Yehoshua. “Why in the world are you lying there flat on your face? Yisra’el has done wrong—

h  
i

j and more to the point, they've violated my treaty which I commanded  
them to follow. Specifically, they took some items from the ban devo-  
tion, they stole some others, then they lied about it, and finally they  
hid them among their personal things. So the Yisra'elites won't be  
k able to defend themselves against their enemies—they'll turn tail from  
them, for they're now the banned ones! I can't be with you all any-  
l more unless you exterminate the banned one from your community.  
m Consecrate the people at once. Tell them this: 'Consecrate yourselves  
n tomorrow, for thus says Yisra'el's god Yahweh: 'A banned person  
is present in your community, Yisra'el. You won't be able to defend  
yourselves against your enemies until you remove the banned one  
from your community.' In the morning you should present yourselves  
in your tribes. The tribe that Yahweh designates by lot should come  
forward in its clans. Then the clan that Yahweh designates by lot  
should come forward in its families. Then the family that Yahweh  
designates by lot should come forward with just its men. Then the  
one who is designated by lot as the banned one shall be immolated  
in a fire—he and all those belonging to him, for he has violated the  
terms of Yahweh's treaty and done something utterly contemptible in  
o Yisra'el.' "

Yehoshua started early the next morning. He had Yisra'el present  
itself in its tribes, and the lot fell to the tribe of Yehudah.

p Then he had Yehudah's clan present itself, and the lot fell to the  
Zarhites' clan.

q Then he had the Zarhites' clan present itself by just its men and  
the lot fell to Zavdiy.

Then he had Zavdiy's family present itself by just its men and  
the lot fell to Akan Karmiysson Zavdiysson Zerahsson of the tribe of  
Yehudah.

"Son," Yehoshua said to Akan, "please give honor to Yisra'el's god  
Yahweh and praise him. Please tell me what you did and don't hide  
anything from me."

"Truly, I have wronged Yisra'el's god Yahweh," Akan replied to  
Yehoshua. "Here is exactly what I did: I noticed among the plunder  
r an especially fine Babylonian coat, two hundred sheqels of silver, and  
a single gold ingot weighing fifty sheqels. I wanted them, so I took  
them. They're hidden inside my tent, in the ground, and the silver's  
underneath."



Yehoshua sent some couriers who ran to the tent—they discovered it hidden inside his tent, and the silver was underneath. They took the items from his tent and brought them to Yehoshua and the Yisra’elites, dropping them on the ground in front of Yahweh. Yehoshua then took Akan Zerahsson, the silver, the coat, the gold ingot, Akan’s sons and daughters, his cattle, asses, and sheep, and his tent—everything that belonged to him—and, accompanied by all Yisra’el, marched them up to the Akor Valley.

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u

*Akor: trouble*

“May Yahweh trouble you today how you troubled us!” Yehoshua pronounced. Then all Yisra’el stoned him with rocks—they immolated them in fire and pelted them with rocks. Then they heaped a gigantic pile of stones on top of him, which remains to this day. And so Yahweh relented from his anger. This is why that place is still called Akor Valley today.

v

*Akor: trouble*

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“Don’t fear and don’t be discouraged,” Yahweh said to Yehoshua. “Take your entire military forces with you and go to Ay at once. Look here—I’ve delivered Ay’s king and his people into your hands, as well as his town and his land. Do to Ay and its king just as you did to Yeriyo and its king! Except this time, you may take its plunder and livestock for yourselves. Set up an ambush behind the town.”

P14 [Ch. 8] a

b

c

Yehoshua and his entire military forces then made ready to go up to Ay. He selected thirty thousand able warriors and deployed them under cover of night with the following orders: “Take note: you’re going to be secretly lying in wait behind the town. Don’t put yourselves too far from town—all of you must be ready. Meanwhile, I and all the forces with me will approach the town. When they come out to engage us as they did previously, we’ll run away from them. They’ll come out after us as we lure them away from the town, for they’ll think we’re running away from them just as we did before. And we will run away from them. When that happens, you must get up from your hiding place and take possession of the town—your god Yahweh will deliver it into your hands. Then, as soon as you seize the town, you must set fire to it—do exactly as Yahweh has ordered. Take note: these are your orders.”

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e

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So Yehoshua sent them off, and they proceeded to their hiding place, taking position between Beyth-El and Ay, to the west of Ay. Yehoshua spent that night among his military forces and got an early start in the morning. He mustered his forces, and then he and Yisra'el's elders went up to Ay at the head of their forces. All [*the military*] the forces who were with him marched up and approached the town. Arriving opposite the town, they made camp to the north of Ay, with a valley separating their camp and the town. (Now he had taken approximately five thousand men and set them up as an ambush force between Beyth-El and Ay, to the west of the town.)

So the military forces had established both the main camp (which was north of the town) and its outpost (to the west of the town). That night, Yehoshua went into the valley. When Ay's king noticed these developments, the men of the town roused themselves to action: they made an early start in the morning and went out to engage Yisra'el in battle—the king and all his forces—at the planned time in front of the plain. (Now he was unaware that there was an ambush lying in wait for him behind the town.)

Yehoshua and all Yisra'el let themselves be attacked by them, and then fled down Wilderness Road. All the people who remained in Ay organized themselves to pursue them, and so they chased after Yehoshua and were drawn away from the town. Not a single man remained in Ay or Beyth El who didn't go out after Yisra'el. Leaving the town wide open, they went in pursuit of Yisra'el.

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P15 a “Hold out the spear that’s in your hand toward Ay,” Yahweh said to Yehoshua, “for I’m going to deliver it into your hands!”

Yehoshua held out the spear that was in his hand toward the town; at the same time, the forces lying in wait quickly leapt from their spot and, breaking into a sprint as Yehoshua extended his arm, entered the town and captured it. Then they hurriedly set fire to the town. When the men of Ay turned around, they were surprised to see smoke from the town rising up into the sky. But they didn't have the strength to run in two different directions. (Meanwhile, the forces that were fleeing to the wilderness turned around back toward their pursuers.)

When Yehoshua and Yisra'el's forces saw that the men lying in wait had captured the town and that smoke was rising up from it, they turned back and attacked Ay's men. (These men had come from the town to engage Yisra'el, and now they were caught in the middle of Yisra'el's forces, with one contingent on one side of them and another on the opposite side.) And so Yisra'el slaughtered them, not letting a single person survive or escape. At that time they captured the king of Ay alive and presented him to Yehoshua.

Once Yisra'el had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ay out in the countryside (that is, in the wilderness into which they had pursued them)—all of them slain in battle and finished off—Yisra'el's forces returned to Ay and slaughtered everyone there. All those who were slain that day, including both men and women, numbered twelve thousand—Ay's entire population.

Now Yehoshua didn't pull back the arm holding out his spear until all of Ay's inhabitants had been slaughtered as a ban devotion. However, the Yisra'elites pillaged the livestock and that town's spoils for themselves, in keeping with Yahweh's command to Yehoshua.

And so Yehoshua burned down Ay and turned it into a permanent ruin heap, as it remains to the present day. At that time, he hung the king of Ay's corpse on a tree until evening; then, once the sun had set, Yehoshua gave the order and they took his corpse down from the tree and threw it in front of the town gate. They then heaped a large pile of stones on top of him, which remains to the present day.

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At that time, Yehoshua built an altar to Yisra'el's god Yahweh on Mount Eyval, just as Mosheh Yahwehsservant had commanded the Yisra'elites to do, as is written in the scroll of Mosheh's Torah—an altar of flawless stones untouched by iron tools. On it they offered up whole offerings to Yahweh and slaughtered welfare offerings. At that site on some stones he wrote a copy of Mosheh's Torah, which Mosheh himself had written down in front of the Yisra'elites. As he did this, all Yisra'el, its elders, its officials, and its judges were standing on either side of the chest in front of the Lewite priests who were holding Yahweh's treaty chest—foreigners and native-born alike, half of them facing Mount Gerizim and the other half facing Mount

f Eyval, in keeping with Mosheh Yahwehsservant's command that he  
g had previously given to bless the people Yisra'el. After this, Yehoshua  
h read out everything in the Torah—both the blessing and the curse—in  
keeping with all that is recorded in the scroll of the Torah. There wasn't  
i a single thing out of all that Mosheh commanded that Yehoshua failed  
to read in front of the community of Yisra'el, including the women  
and children, as well as the foreigners travelling with them.

[Ch. 9] j When all the kings in the region west of the Yarden—in the moun-  
tains, in the low country, and along the entire coast of the Great Sea  
going towards the Levanon region—the Hethites, the Amorites, the  
Kena'anites, the Perizzites, the Hiwwites and the Yevusites—when  
those kings heard the report regarding Yisra'el, they joined forces and  
formed a united coalition to go to war with Yehoshua and Yisra'el.

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P17 When the citizens of Giv'on heard what Yehoshua did to Yeriyo and  
a b to Ay, they also acted craftily: they went and provisioned themselves,  
taking worn sackcloth for their asses, worn wineskins that had been  
ripped and mended, wearing worn and patched sandals on their feet  
and ratty coats on their bodies, and all their provisions of food were  
c dried out and spotted with mold. They went to see Yehoshua at the  
d e camp at Gilgal. "We have come from a far off country," they said to  
Yehoshua and the Yisra'elites. "So then, make a treaty with us."

f "For all we know, you might be living right here among us. So  
how could we make a treaty with you?" the Yisra'elites asked the  
g Hiwwites.

h "We're your servants," they said to Yehoshua.

"Who are you and where do you come from?" Yehoshua asked  
them.

"Your servants have come from a country very far away because of  
your god Yahweh's fame," they replied. "For we heard a report about  
i him—about everything that he did to Egypt and everything he did to  
two of the Amorites' kings on the other side of the Yarden, to Hesh-  
bon's king Sihon and to Bashan's king Og who ruled in Ashtaroth.  
'Collect provisions for a journey,' our elders and our country's citizens  
j told us, 'and go to meet them. Tell them we're their servants and that  
we want them to make a treaty with us.' Here is the warm bread we

took from our families as provisions the day that we left to come to you. Now look at it: it's dried out and spotted with mold. These are the wineskins that we filled when they were new—look how torn they are. And these are our coats and sandals—they're worn out because of the very long journey."

The men took some of their provisions, but they didn't ask Yahweh for an oracle. So Yehoshua made peace with them, agreeing to a treaty to spare their lives, and the community's leaders swore an oath to them to that effect. Then, two days later—after they had made a treaty with them—they learned that they were neighbors to them, and in fact were living right there among them. The Yisra'elites then departed and arrived in their towns two days later (their towns were Giv'on and The Lion Cub, and Be'eroth and Forest Village).

So the Yisra'elites didn't attack them, for the community's leaders had sworn an oath by Yisra'el's god Yahweh—but everyone in the community complained to each other about their leaders.

"We swore an oath to them by Yisra'el's god Yahweh," the leaders reminded the community. "Therefore, we're not permitted to harm them. This is what we should do to them: let them live, so that we don't suffer Yahweh's anger on account of the oath that we swore to them."

"They ought to live," their leaders said to them.

And so they served as gatherers of wood and drawers of water for everyone in the community, exactly as their leaders had proposed to them.

Yehoshua then summoned them. "Why did you deceive us and say you lived very far away," he asked, "when in fact you live right here among us?! So damn you for lying! However, none of you who become a servant will be killed—specifically, none of you who serve as gatherers of wood and drawers of water for my god's nation."

"Indeed," they said to Yehoshua in response, "your servants were very well informed of what your god Yahweh commanded his servant Mosheh—that he would give you this entire country and that he would wipe out all the country's inhabitants to clear the way for you—and we feared greatly for our lives because of you. That's why we did what we did. So then, we're putting ourselves into your hands—do whatever you think is the good and right thing to do to us."

w And so he accordingly did to them—he saved them from the  
Yisra’elites and they didn’t kill them. At that time Yehoshua desig-  
x nated them as gatherers of wood and drawers of water for the com-  
munity, and also for Yahweh’s altar (as they are today) at the place  
that he chooses.

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P18 [Ch. 10] When Yerushalem’s king Adoniy-Tzedeq heard that Yehoshua had  
a captured Ay and slaughtered everyone there as a ban devotion (doing  
to Ay and its king just as he had done to Yeriyyo and its king), and  
b that the citizens of Giv’on had made peace with Yisra’el and lived  
among them, they were terrified, for Giv’on was a large town like one  
of the royal cities—indeed it was larger than Ay and all its men were  
excellent warriors.

c Yerushalem’s king Adoniy-Tzedeq sent a message to Hoham king  
of Hevron, to Pir’am king of Yarmuth, to Yaphiya king of Lakiysh,  
and to Deviyir king of Eglon: “Come up here and assist me: let’s  
d attack Giv’on, for it’s made a peace agreement with Yehoshua and  
the Yisra’elites.” And so five of the Amorites’ kings—the king of  
Yerushalem, the king of Hevron, the king of Yarmuth, the king of  
Lakiysh, and the king of Eglon—joined forces and marched up, they  
and their entire armies, taking position against Giv’on and engaging  
it in battle.

e The citizens of Giv’on sent the following message to Yehoshua,  
to the camp at Gilgal: “Don’t withhold your aid from your servants!  
f Hurry, come to us! Save us and help us, for all the kings of the  
Amorites in the hill country have joined forces against us!” And so  
Yehoshua marched out from Gilgal—he along with his entire armed  
forces, all of whom were excellent warriors.

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P19 a “Don’t be afraid of them,” Yahweh said to Yehoshua, “for I’ve delivered  
them into your hands. Not a single one of their men will hold his  
ground against you!”

Yehoshua came upon them by surprise, having travelled all night  
from Gilgal. Yahweh threw them into disarray at Yisra’el’s approach,

and so Yisra'el defeated them decisively there in Giv'on. Then Yisra'el pursued them on the road to the pass at Beyth-Horon, skirmishing with them as far as Azeqah and Maqqedah. During their flight from Yisra'el, when they happened to be on Beyth-Horon's slopes, Yahweh threw huge stones down upon them from the sky as far as Azeqah, with deadly effect—in fact, those who died from the hailstones far outnumbered those whom the Yisra'elites killed in battle. b

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At that time, on the day that Yahweh set the Amorites in front of the Yisra'elites, Yehoshua spoke the following to Yahweh: P19,1

“As Yisra'el looks on, let the sun be stilled in Giv'on—  
the moon also, in Deer Valley!” a  
And so the sun stopped and the moon stood still— b  
while a nation took vengeance on its enemies!

So it is written in the Scroll of the Most Esteemed. The sun stood still in one half of the sky, and didn't get around to setting for nearly a whole day. Never before or since has there been a day like that one, when Yahweh obeyed a man, for Yahweh was fighting for Yisra'el. c  
d

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Yehoshua along with all of Yisra'el returned to the camp at Gilgal. Now those five kings had fled and hidden in the cave at Maqqedah. When it was reported to Yehoshua that the five kings had been found hiding in the cave in Maqqedah, he gave the following order: “Roll some large stones to the mouth of the cave and station some men there to guard them. Don't you dare delay—go after your enemies and cut down whoever's left! Don't let them get to their home towns, for your god Yahweh has delivered them into your hands!” P19,2  
a

But when Yehoshua and the Yisra'elites were done with slaughtering them—a slaughter of gigantic proportions—and had finished them off, some who had survived managed to escape to fortified towns. Then all the forces returned to Yehoshua at their camp at Maqqedah well satisfied—no complaints were made by anyone about the Yisra'elites. b  
c  
d

“Open the mouth of the cave,” Yehoshua ordered, “and bring those five kings to me from the cave.” They did just that, bringing those five kings to him from the cave—the king of Yerushalem, the king

of Hevron, the king of Yarmuth, the king of Lakiysh, and the king of Eglon. Once they had brought those five kings to Yehoshua, he summoned every person in Yisra'el.

"Come here," Yehoshua said to the leaders of the armed forces who had gone with him. "Place your feet on the necks of these kings."

They approached and placed their feet on their necks.

e "Don't be afraid and don't be discouraged," Yehoshua said to them. "Be strong and be bold! For Yahweh is going to treat all your enemies whom you fight just like this!" Whereupon Yehoshua delivered the mortal blows, executing them and then hanging their bodies on five trees. And so they remained hanging on the trees until evening. Then f at sunset Yehoshua gave the order and they took the corpses down from the trees. They then threw them into the cave where they had hidden and placed large stones over the mouth of the cave, which remain to this day.

g  
P19,3 That same day Yehoshua captured Maqqedah, conducting a slaughter there and giving over its king as a ban devotion—they and every person in the town. He didn't spare a single person—he did to Maqqedah's king exactly as he had done to Yeriyo's king.

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P19,4 From Maqqedah Yehoshua proceeded with Yisra'el to Livnah and engaged Livnah in battle. Yahweh also delivered that town and its king into Yisra'el's hand—they put it to the slaughter and killed every a person in the town. Yehoshua didn't spare a single person, doing to b its king just as he had done to Yeriyo's king.

P19,5 From Livnah Yehoshua proceeded with Yisra'el to Lakiysh, first taking position to attack and then engaging it battle. Yahweh delivered Lakiysh into Yisra'el's hand. They captured it the following day and a put it to the slaughter, killing every person in the town, similar to all that they had done to Livnah.

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P20 At that time Horam king of Gezer came to Lakiysh's aid. But Yehoshua struck hard at him and his forces, not leaving a single survivor. From Lakiysh Yehoshua proceeded with Yisra'el to Eglon, taking position to



attack and then engaging it in battle. They captured the town the same day and put it to the slaughter. That same day he made a ban devotion of every person there, similar to all that he had done to Lakiysh.

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From Eglon Yehoshua proceeded with Yisra'el to Hevron and attacked it. They captured the town and put it to the slaughter, killing its king, the towns under its control, and every person in it. Yehoshua didn't spare a single person, similar to what he had done to Eglon, and he made a ban devotion of the town and of every person in it.

P21

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Yehoshua then doubled back with Yisra'el to Devir and attacked it, capturing it, its king, and all the towns under its control. They put all of it to the slaughter and made a ban devotion of every person in the town. Yehoshua spared no one—just as he had done to Hevron, so he did to Devirah and its king (and just as he had done to Livnah and its king).

P21,1

a b

Yehoshua defeated the entire land—the mountain country, the south region, the low country, the foothills, and all the kings in those regions. He spared no one and made a ban devotion of every living soul, just as Yisra'el's god Yahweh had commanded. Yehoshua killed them all, from Qadesh Barnea to Azzah and the entire Goshen region as far as Giv'on. All these kings and their lands Yehoshua captured in one fell swoop, for Yisra'el's god Yahweh was fighting on Yisra'el's behalf.

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Yehoshua then returned with Yisra'el to the camp at Gilgal.

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When Yaviyn king of Hatzor heard the news, he sent messengers to Yovav king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Akshaph, and to the kings in the north in the mountain country, in the plain opposite Kineroth, in the low country, and in Dor Heights to the west. (The Kena'anites were to the east and the west; the Amorites, Hethites, Perizzites and Yevusites were in the mountain country; and the Hiwwites were at the foot of Mount Hermon in the Mitzpah region.) They marched out with their entire armed forces—a huge army, as

P22 [Ch. 11]

a

b

numerous as the sand on the seashore—and a great many horses and chariots. Once all these kings had joined up, they proceeded onwards, making camp together at Merom Waters, in order to engage Yisra’el in battle.

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P23 a “Don’t be afraid of them,” Yahweh said to Yehoshua. “For around this time tomorrow, I’m going to turn them all into corpses in front of Yisra’el—and you’ll hamstring their horses and incinerate their chariots in fire.”

b Yehoshua with his entire military force came upon them unawares at Merom Waters and attacked them by surprise. Yahweh delivered them into Yisra’el’s hands—and so they commenced the slaughter, pursuing them to Greater Tziydon, to Burning Water, and to Mitzpeh Valley to the east. They slaughtered them all and didn’t spare a single person. Yehoshua did to them exactly as Yahweh told him to do—he hamstrung their horses and incinerated their chariots in fire.

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P23,1 At that time, Yehoshua went back and captured Hatzor, while also  
a killing its king in battle (for Hatzor previously was the head of all these kingdoms). They slaughtered every person in the town as a ban devotion—not a living soul remained. At the same time, they burned  
b Hatzor to the ground.

c Yehoshua captured all the towns controlled by these kings, and  
d he captured their kings as well, putting them all to the sword and  
e making a ban devotion of them, just as Mosheh Yahwehsservant had commanded. However, Yisra’el did not burn down any of the towns that stood on tells with the exception of Hatzor—Yehoshua burned it alone to the ground. The Yisra’elites plundered all these towns, taking  
f spoils and livestock for themselves. At the same time, however, they slaughtered every human being in them, wiping them out and sparing not a living soul.

g Exactly as Yahweh had commanded his servant Mosheh, so Mosheh  
h commanded Yehoshua, and so Yehoshua did—he didn’t deviate in any way from anything that Yahweh had commanded Mosheh. And  
i so Yehoshua took control of the land in its entirety—the mountain country, all of the Southern desert, all of the Goshen region, the low

country, and the desert plain, and also Yisra'el's mountain country and its low country, from the barren mountain region extending to Se'iy'r in the south all the way to Ba'al Gad in the Levanon Valley below Mount Hermon in the north—while capturing all their kings and defeating and executing them.

j

Yehoshua made war against all these kings for a long time—there wasn't a single town that made a peace agreement with the Yisra'elites except the Hiwwites living in Giv'on. They seized every town in battle, for it was Yahweh's plan to give them courage to engage Yisra'el in battle, in order that Yisra'el might make a ban devotion of them and show them no mercy—yes, in order to destroy them utterly, just as Yahweh had commanded Mosheh.

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At that time, Yehoshua went and exterminated the Anaqis from the mountain country, from Hevron, from Devir, and from Enav—that is, from all of Yehudah's mountain country and all of Yisra'el's mountain country. Yehoshua made a ban devotion of them along with their towns—no Anaqis remained in the Yisra'elites' land. (There were, however, some that remained in Azzah, Gath, and Ashdod.) Yehoshua took control of the entire land, exactly as Yahweh had told Mosheh, and he gave it to Yisra'el as their property, in accord with the divisions within their tribes.

P23,2

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And so the land rested from the war.

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Here are the kings of the land whom the Yisra'elites defeated and whose land they took possession of in the region to the east of the Yarden, between the Wadi Arnon and Mount Hermon, including the entire desert steppe in the east:

P23,3 [Ch. 12]

a

—Siyhon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, and whose dominion extended from Ero'er (which is located on the bank of the Wadi Arnon and the middle part of the wadi) and half of the Gil'ad region all the way to the border with the Ammonites on the Wadi Yabboq; and the desert steppe up to the eastern shore of the Kinroth Sea in the north and down to the eastern shore of the Desert Steppe Sea [*that is, the Salt Sea*] in the south, toward Desolationville; and from Teyman under the slopes of Mount Pisgah with the border.

b

c

d

—Og king of the Bashan region, who was descended from the Repha'ites, who ruled in Ashtaroth and Edre'iy, and whose dominion

extended from Mount Hermon, Salkah, and the entire Bashan region all the way to the border with the Geshurites and the Ma'akathites, including half of the Gil'ad region bordering Siyhon king of Heshbon.

e Mosheh Yahwehsservant and the Yisra'elites defeated them, after which Mosheh Yahwehsservant gave their lands to the Re'uenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Menashsheh as their allotted property.

P23,4 Here are the kings of the land whom Yehoshua and the Yisra'elites defeated in the region west of the Yarden, from Ba'al Gad in the Levanon Valley all the way to the barren mountain region leading up to Se'iyar [*Yehoshua gave this land to the tribes of Yisra'el as their property in keeping with their tribal divisions.*] [*In the mountain country, the low country, the plains, the foothills, the desert, and the south region were found the Hethites, the Amorites, the Kena'anites, the Perizzites, the Hiwwites, and the Yevusites.*]:

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P24	a	The king of Yeriyyo	one
P24,1		The king of Ay (which is next to Beyth-El)	one
P24,2		The king of Yerushalem	one
P24,3		The king of Hevron	one
P24,4		The king of Yarmuth	one
P24,5		The king of Lakiysh	one
P24,6		The king of Eglon	one
P24,7		The king of Gezer	one
P24,8		The king of Devir	one
P24,9		The king of Geder	one

The king of Hormah	—	one	P24,10
The king of Arad	—	one	P24,11
The king of Livnah	—	one	P24,12
The king of Adullam	—	one	P24,13
The king of Maqqedah	—	one	P24,14
The king of Beyth-El	—	one	P24,15
The king of Tappuah	—	one	P24,16
The king of Hephher	—	one	P24,17
The king of Apheq	—	one	P24,18
The king of Lashsharon	—	one	P24,19
The king of Madon	—	one	P24,20
The king of Hatzor	—	one	P24,21
The king of Shimron Meron	—	one	P24,22
The king of Akshaph	—	one	P24,23
The king of Ta'nak	—	one	P24,24
The king of Megiddo	—	one	P24,25
The king of Qedesh	—	one	P24,26
The king of Yoqne'am at Karmel	—	one	P24,27
The king of Dor at Dor Heights	—	one	P24,28

P24,29	The king of Goyim at Gilgal	one
P24,30	The king of Tirtzah	one
P24,31	Total number of kings	thirty-one

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- P25 [Ch. 13] When Yehoshua had grown old and was advanced in years, Yahweh spoke to him:
- a “You’ve grown old and advanced in years, yet a great deal of the land remains to take possession of. Here is the land that remains:
- b “—all the districts of the Philishtines, all the Geshurites’ land [*From the Shiyhor river on the eastern side of Egypt all the way north to Eqron’s border is considered part of the Kena’anites’ land.*] [*The five princes of the*
- c *Philishtines are the one from Azzah and the one from Ashdod; the one from Ashqelon, the one from Gath, and the one from Eqron.*], and the Awwites
- “—the entirety of the Kena’anites’ country between Teyman and the Amorites’ border, including the Me’arah region (which belongs to the Tzidonians) as far as Apheqah
- d “—the Gevalites’ country
- “—and all the Lebanon region in the east, from Ba’al Gad at the foot of Mount Hermon all the way to the entrance to Hemath.
- e “Now as for all the inhabitants of the mountain country between the Lebanon and Burning Water [*all of whom are Tziydonians*], I’m going to dispossess them of their lands and clear the way for the Yisra’elites. However, you must be sure to allot it to Yisra’el as its property, exactly as I’ve commanded you. So then, divide up this land as the property
- f g for nine of the tribes plus half of the tribe of Menashsheh.” (With the latter the Re’uvenites and the Gadites took their property—the property which Mosheh gave them in the region east of the Yarden [*just as Mosheh Yahwehsservant gave to them*]: from Ero’er on the banks of the Wadi Arnon, including the town situated in the wadi bed, all the tableland, the Meydeva region as far as Diyvon, and all the towns of Sihon king of the Amorites who ruled in Heshbon as far as the border with the Ammonites; the Gil’ad region, including the Geshurites’ and the Ma’akathites’ territory; all of Mount Hermon; and

the entire Bashan region as far as Salkah—the entire kingdom of Og in the Bashan region who ruled in Ashtaroth and Edre’iy [*he was one of the last remaining Repha’ites whom Mosheh defeated and dispossessed*].) [*The Yisra’elites dispossessed neither the Geshurites nor the Ma’akathites, and both Geshur and Ma’akath have lived within Yisra’el down to the present day.*] [*However, to the tribe of Lewiy he did not give any property. Their property is the fire offerings presented to Yisra’el’s god Yahweh, exactly as Yahweh promised them.*]

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Mosheh gave the Re’uvenites’ tribe their land in accord with their clan divisions. Their territory encompassed Ero’er on the banks of the Arnon, including the town situated in the wadi bed; all the tableland adjacent to Meydeva; Heshbon and all its towns in the tableland—Diyvon, Bamoth Ba’al, Beyth Ba’al Me’on, Yahtzah, Qedemoth, Mepha’ath, Qiryathayim, and Sivmah; Tzereth HashShahar in the lowland hills; Beyth Pe’or; the foothills of the Pisgah region; and Desolationville (all the towns of the tableland and the entire kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites who ruled in Heshbon [*whom Mosheh defeated along with Midyan’s chiefs—Ewiy, Regem, Tzur, Hur, and Reva (Sihon’s princes who lived in that country)*]). [*The diviner Bil’am Be’orsson was among those whom the Yisra’elites killed in battle.*] The border of the Re’uvenites’ territory was the Yarden river.

This is the territory owned by the Re’uvenites, divided among their clans, including towns and the towns’ outlying villages.

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Mosheh gave the tribe of Gad (the Gadites) their land in accord with their clan divisions. Their territory encompassed Ya’zer and all the towns of the Gil’ad region and half of the Ammonites’ country, as far as Ero’er which is to the east of Rabbah; the area from Heshbon to Lookout Heights and Betoniym; the area from Mahanayim to the border with Devir; and in the lowlands: Beyth Haran, Beyth Nimrah, Sukkoth, and Tzaphon (the remnant of the kingdom of Heshbon’s king Sihon). Their border ran along the Yarden as far as the southern end of the Kinnereth Sea—the region to the east of the Yarden.

This is the territory owned by the Gadites, divided among their clans, including towns and the towns' outlying villages.

d  
P27,1 Mosheh gave half of the tribe of Menashsheh its land—it belonged to half of the tribe of the Menashshehites in accord with their clan divisions. Their territory encompassed Mahanayim, the entire Bashan region (the entire kingdom of Bashan's king Og), all of Ya'iy's Hamlets located in the Bashan region (sixty towns total), and half of the region of Gil'ad, including the two principal towns of Og's kingdom in Bashan, Ashtaroth and Edre'iy—the property of the descendants of Makiyr Menashshehsson (the property of half of the Makiyrites), divided among their clans.

c  
d These were the tribes and clans that Mosheh gave territory to when the Yisra'elites were camped in the desert steppes of Mo'av, in the region across the Yarden to the east of Yeriho.

e \*\*

P28 a However, Mosheh did not allot any property to the Lewites' tribe—  
b Yisra'el's god Yahweh is their allotted property, just as he promised them he would be.

c  
P28,1 [Ch. 14] These are the territories that the Yisra'elites took possession of in  
a b Kena'an, which El'azar the Priest and Yehoshua Nunsson and the heads of the tribal families allotted to them. Their territory was determined by lot, exactly as Yahweh had commanded through Mosheh, for  
c nine-and-a-half tribes (for Mosheh had allotted territory to two-and-a-half tribes in the region across the Yarden, whereas he didn't grant the  
d Lewites any property among them). [*For the Yosephites consisted of two tribes—Menashsheh and Ephrayim—and no allotment in the land was given to the Lewites except towns to live in and the open lands attached to them for their livestock and personal property.*] Just as Yahweh commanded  
e Mosheh, so the Yisra'elites did, apportioning out their land.  
f

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P29 a The Yehudeans went to see Yehoshua at Gilgal.  
b "You know what Yahweh said to the holy man Mosheh about me



and you when we were in Qadesh Barnea,” Kalev Yephunnehsson the Qenizzite said to Yehoshua. “I was forty years old when Mosheh Yahwehsservant sent me from Qadesh Barnea to explore the land, and I reported back to him exactly as I felt. My kinsmen who went to explore the land with me made the people lose their courage, whereas I followed unwaveringly after my god Yahweh. And Mosheh swore to me at that time that the land I explored on foot would become my property and the property of my children after me, for all time, precisely because I had followed unwaveringly after his god Yahweh. So now, as you see: Yahweh has kept me alive the forty-five years since he made that promise about me to Mosheh, during which time Yisra’el travelled through the desert. So now, here I am today, a man of eighty-five years—and I’m still as strong now as I was when Mosheh sent me. My strength today is the same as my strength then, even with respect to joining military campaigns and carrying out missions. So now, give me that mountain region which Yahweh promised me back then! For you yourself heard back then that there were Anaqis there in the mountains with large, well-fortified towns—perhaps Yahweh will be with me and I’ll dispossess them, just as Yahweh promised!”

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In response, Yehoshua blessed Kalev Yephunnehsson and gave him Hevron as his property. And as a result, Hevron has belonged to Kalev Yephunnehsson the Qenizzite’s family as their property down to the present day, because he followed unwaveringly after Yisra’el’s god Yahweh. [*Hevron was previously named Arba’s Village—Arba was the greatest man among the Anaqis.*]

j

And so the land rested from war.

k

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The lot for the Yehudeans’ tribe, in accord with their clan divisions, was alongside Edom’s territory (specifically, the Tzin Desert and southwards, where Teyman ends). Their southern border begins at the end of the Salt Sea, at the outlet flowing south, and then goes southwards to Scorpions’ Pass, crosses Tzinah, climbs southwards to Qadesh Barnea, crosses through Hetzron, ascends to Addar, winds its way to the Qarqa region, crosses through Atzmon, and stops at Egypt Wadi—these are the coordinates of the southern border. [*This will serve as your border on the south.*]

P30 [Ch. 15]

a b

c

The eastern border: the Salt Sea up to the mouth of the Yarden.

- d The border on the northern side begins at the inlet to the sea where the Yarden ends. The border goes up to Partridgeville and crosses north to Aridville; the border then climbs to the stone called Re'uvensson's Big Toe, ascends to Devir from the Akor Valley, and then turns north to the stone circle that is next to Adummiym Pass, opposite the wadi. The border then passes by the waters of Sun Spring, with its furthest point extending to Fuller's Spring. The border then goes up to Hinnomsson's Valley on the south side of the Yevusite region [*that is, Yerushalem*] and ascends to the top of the mountain that is west of Hinnom's Valley and at the northern end of the Repha'ite Lowland. The border next makes a line from the mountain peak to the spring of Naphtoah's Waters, extends out to the towns of Mount Ephron, and then makes a line to Ba'alalah [*that is, Forest Village*].
- e The border then winds around westwards from Ba'alalah to Mount Se'iyir, passes by the north side of Forest Mountain [*that is, Kesalon*], descends to Sunville and passes through Timnah. The border goes next to the northern side of Eqron and then makes a line to Shikkeron. Finally it passes by Mistress Mountain and ends at Yavne'el.

These are the coordinates of the western border: the Great Sea serves as the western border.

These are the Yehudeans' borders on all sides, according to their clan divisions.

- f Now Kalev Yephunnehsson was given an allotment with the Yehudeans in keeping with Yahweh's command to Yehoshua: Arba's Village [*Arba was the ancestor of the Anaqis*]*—that is, Hebron*. Kalev drove out three Anaqis from there—Sheshay, Ahiyman, and Talmay, descendants of the Anaqis. From there he went to fight the citizens of Devir (Devir's previous name was Qiryath-Sepher). "Whoever attacks Qiryath-Sepher and captures it," Kalev announced, "I will give him my daughter Aksah for a wife." Kalev's kinsman Othniy'el Qenaz-son captured it and so Kalev gave him his daughter Aksah for a wife. When she arrived to see them, she implored him to ask her father for some pasture land. Then, as she slipped off the ass, Kalev asked how
- g she was. "Give me a gift," she demanded. "Because you've already given me the Southern Desert region, you also ought to give me some water pools." And so he gave her the upper pools and the lower pools.

This is the property allotted to the Yehudeans' tribe, according to their clan divisions: P31

The towns where the Yehudites' tribe came to an end, alongside Edom's territory in the south, were Qavtze'el, Eder, Yagur, Qiynah, Diymonah, Ad'adah, Qedesh, Hatzor, Yithnan, Ziyph, Telem, Be'aloth, New Hatzor, Hetzron's [*that is, Hatzor's*] Villages, Amam, Shema, Moladah, Gaddah's Hamlet, Heshmon, Beyth Pelet, Fox Hamlet, Be'er Sheva, Bizyotheyah, Ba'alah, Iyyiym, Etzem, Eltolad, Kesiyl, Hormah, Tziqlag, Madmannah, Sansannah, Leva'oth, Shilhiym, Ayin, and Pomegranate. Twenty-nine towns total plus their hamlets. a

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In the low country: Eshta'ol, Tzare'ah, Ashnah, Zanoah, and Spring Gardens; Tappuah and Ha'eynam; Yarmuth and Adullam; Sokoh, Azaqah, Twin Gates, Adiythayim, The Fence, and Twin Fences. Fourteen towns plus their hamlets. a

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Tzenan, Newtown, Gad's Tower, Dil'an, Lookout Point, and Yoqthe'el; Lakiysh, Batzeqath, Eglon, Kabbon, Lahmas, Kithliysh, and Fences; Dagon's Place, Pleasantville, and Maqqedah. Sixteen towns plus their hamlets. b

—  
Livnah, Ether, Ashan, Yiphtah, Ashnah, Netziyv, Qe'iylah, Akziyv, and Mareshah. Nine towns plus their hamlets. P31,3

—  
Eqron, its villages and its hamlets. From Eqron to the west: everything adjacent to Ashdod plus their hamlets. P31,4

—  
Ashdod, its villages and its hamlets; Azzah, its villages and its hamlets as far as the Egypt Wadi, with the Great Sea as the border. P31,5

—  
In the mountains: Thornbush, Yattiyr, Sokoh, Dannah, and Bramble Village [*that is, Devir*]. P31,6

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Enav, Eshtemoh, Aniyim, Goshen, Holon, and Giloh. Eleven towns plus their hamlets. P31,7 a

<sup>b</sup>  
P31,8 Arav, Rumah, Esh'an, Yanum, Tappuah, Epheqah, Humtah, Arba's Village [*that is, Hebron*], and Tziy'or. Nine towns plus their hamlets.

P31,9 Ma'on, Karmel, Ziyph, Yuttah, Yizre'el, Yoqde'am, and Zanoah; Haq-Qayin; Giv'ah, and Thimnah. Ten towns plus their hamlets.

<sup>a</sup>  
P31,10 Halhul, Cliff Place, and Gedor; Ma'arath, Anoth's Place, and Elteqon. Six towns plus their hamlets.

<sup>a</sup>  
P32 <sup>a</sup> Ba'al's Village [*that is, Forest Village*] and Harabbah. Two towns plus their hamlets.

P32,1 In the desert: Aridville, Middiyn, Sekakah, HanNivshan, Salt Town, and Kid Spring. Six towns plus their hamlets.

<sup>a</sup> [*But as for the Yevusites—that is, inhabitants of Yerushalem—the Yehudeans were unable to drive them out, and so the Yevusites have lived with the Yehudeans in Yerushalem down to the present day.*]

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P33 [Ch. 16]  
<sup>a</sup> The lot next fell to the Yosephites, beginning at the Yarden at Yeriyo (to the east of Yeriyo's waters), including the desert ascending from Yeriyo into the mountain country to Beyth-El. Starting from Beyth-El (that is, Luzah), it heads toward the Arkites' territory at Ataroth, descends westward toward the Yaphletites' territory as far as the border with Lower Beyth-Horon and as far as Gezer. These are its western coordinates.

<sup>b</sup>

The Yosephites—Menashsheh and Ephrayim—took possession of their land.

The territory of the Ephrayimites, according to their clan divisions: the eastern border of the land they took possession of was Atroth Addar as far as Upper Beyth Horon. The border extends west to a point north of HamMikmethath; then the border circles back east to Ta'anath Shiloh, crosses it on the east toward Yanohah, and then from Yanohah descends to Ataroth and Na'arathah. Then it hits Yeriyo

and ends at the Yarden. From Tappuah the border goes west to the Wadi Qanah. These are its western coordinates.

This is the territory possessed by the Ephrayimites' tribe, according to their clan divisions. The towns set aside for the Ephrayimites were located in the territory of the Menashshehites—all their towns plus the towns' hamlets.

But they didn't drive out the Kena'anites who lived in Gezer, and so the Kena'anites have lived in Ephrayim down to the present day, serving as slave labor.

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The next lot fell to the tribe of Menashsheh, for he was Yoseph's first-born—that is, the lot fell to Makiyr, the first-born of Menashsheh and founder of the Gil'ad region, for he was a great warrior. The Gil'ad region and the Bashan region belonged to him, and in turn it belonged to Menashsheh's male successors, according to their clan divisions—to the Eviy'ezerites, the Heleqites, the Asriy'elites, the Shekemites, the Hephherites, and the Shemiyda'ites. (These are Menashsheh Yosephs-son's male descendants, listed by their clans.)

Now Tzelophhad Hephersson Gil'adsson Makiyrrson Menashshehsson had no sons but only daughters. These are his daughters' names: Mahlah and No'ah, and Hoglah, Milkah, and Thirtzah. They went to petition El'azar the Priest, Yehoshua Nunsson and the tribal chieftains, reminding them that Yahweh had commanded Mosheh to give them some property among their kinsmen. And so in accord with Yahweh's directions, some property was given to them among their father's kinsmen. As a result, ten allotments fell to Menashsheh apart from the Gil'ad and Bashan regions on the other side of the Yarden, for Menashsheh's female descendants took possession of property among his male descendants. (The Gil'ad region, however, belonged solely to Menashsheh's male successors.)

The territory of Menashsheh began at Asher (that is, at HamMikmethath to the east of Shekem). Then the territory goes south to the settlements at Apple Spring. (The Apple Spring region belonged to Menashsheh, and that region served as Menashsheh's border with the Ephrayimites.) The territory then descends the Wadi Qanah, going south along the wadi [*these towns belonged to the Ephrayimites, although*

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P34 [Ch. 17]

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h they were situated among Menashsheh's towns], with Menashsheh's territory being north of the wadi and its furthest reaches extending to the sea. The area to the south belonged to Ephrayim and the area to the north to Menashsheh. The sea served as its border to the west, and the territory's furthest reaches touched Asher in the north and Yissakar in the east.

j k Within the territories of Yissakar and Asher, the following belonged to Menashsheh: Beyth-She'an and the neighboring villages, Yivle'am and the neighboring villages, the settlements at Dor and the neighboring villages, the settlements at Dor Spring and the neighboring villages, the settlements at Ta'nak and the neighboring villages, and the settlements at Megiddo and the neighboring villages [*three places in the Heights*]. However, the Menashshehites were not able to take full possession of these towns, and the Kena'anites continued living in that region. Now because the Yisra'elites were strong, they made the Kena'anites serve as slave laborers, but they did not actually drive them out.

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P34,1 a b "Why did you give me property consisting of a single allotment and a single district," the Yosephites complained to Yehoshua, "when I am such a large people? You can see how much Yahweh has blessed me!"

c

d "It's true that you're a large people, so go up into the forestlands," Yehoshua replied to them, "and clear out space for yourselves there in the country of the Perizzites and the Repha'ites. For you'll feel squeezed in by Ephrayim's mountain country if you live only there."

e

f "The mountain country's not even ours!" the Yosephites objected.

g "All the Kena'anites who live in the low country have iron chariots. The mountain country belongs to the people in Beyth-She'an and its neighboring villages and to the people in the Yizre'el Valley."

h "You are a large people," Yehoshua said to Yoseph's successors, to Ephrayim and Menashsheh, "and you possess great strength. So you won't have just one allotment. Indeed, the mountain country will be yours since it is forestland. You must clear it, and then the whole district will belong to you. But you must drive out the Kena'anites, for they have iron chariots. They are formidable indeed!"

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The community of Yisra'elites met at Shiloh, where they had set up the Meeting Tent, the land having been subdued by them. There were still seven tribes among the Yisra'elites that had not received their division of property.

P35 [Ch. 18]

a b  
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"How long are you going to be lazing about and putting off going and taking possession of the land that your ancestors' god Yahweh has given you?!" Yehoshua asked the Yisra'elites. "Designate three men from each tribe whom I can send off so that they might survey the land at once and make a record of their property and its measurements. Then they can come to see me and divide it up among themselves into seven districts. (But Yehudah will remain in its territory to the south, and Yoseph's people will remain in their territory to the north.) You must record the land as seven districts and then bring the record here to me. I will then cast lots for you here in front of our god Yahweh. (But the Lewites won't have an allotment among you, for Yahweh's priesthood will serve as their property. And Gad, Re'uven, and half the tribe of Menashsheh received their property in the region east of the Yarden, which Mosheh Yahwehsservant gave to them.)"

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The men departed at once. "Go and survey the land, record it, and then return to me," Yehoshua ordered the men who were going to survey the land. "Then I'll cast lots for you here in Shiloh in front of

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The men went on their way and criss-crossed the land, recording it on a scroll by its towns and organizing it into seven districts. They went to see Yehoshua at the camp at Shiloh. Yehoshua then cast lots for them in front of Yahweh there in Shiloh—there Yehoshua divided up the land for the Yisra'elites in accord with their tribal divisions.

j

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The lot was cast for the Binyaminites' tribe, according to their clan divisions: their allotted territory fell between the Yehudites and the Yosephites.

P36 a

Their northern border begins at the Yarden, goes up along the north side of Yeriyo, and then ascends west into the mountains, with its furthest reaches extending toward the barren lands at Beyth Awen. From there, their border crosses to Luz—specifically, to the south side of Luz [*that is, Beyth-El*]; the border then descends to Atroth Addar

b beside the mountain that is south of Lower Beyth-Horon.

On its western side, the border traces a winding path to the south, starting at the mountain just south of Beyth-Horon and extending as far as the Yehudites' town Ba'al's Village [*that is, the Yehudites' town Forest Village*]. That is their western border.

d The southern side begins at the edge of Forest Village: the border  
e goes west, going to the spring Naphtoah's Waters; the border then  
f descends to the edge of the mountain opposite Hinnomsson's Valley (which is located on the north side of the Repha'ite Lowland). The border descends into Hinnom's Valley along the south side of the Yevusites, goes down to Fuller's Spring, and then traces a line northwards, going to Sun Spring and to the areas east of Adummiym Pass. It then descends to the stone called Re'uvensson's Big Toe, crosses  
g along on the northern side of the steppe, and then descends into the steppe. The border then passes to the north side of Partridgeville, with its furthest reaches extending to the northern inlet of the Salt Sea at the south end of the Yarden river. That is their southern border.

The Yarden serves as their border on the eastern side.

This is the Binyaminites' territory, as delineated by its borders on all sides, according to their clan divisions.

h \*\*

P37 The towns belonging to the Binyaminites' tribe, according to their clan divisions, were:

a —Yeriho, Partridgeville, Qetziytz Valley, Aridville, Tzemarayim,  
b Beyth-El, Awwites' Town, Cowtown, Ophrah, Ammonites' Village, Ha'Ophniy, and Geva—twelve towns and their hamlets.

—Giv'on, The Height, Be'erother, Lookout Point, The Lion Cub, HamMotzah, Reqem, El-Heals, Thar'alah, Ridge, The Thousand, The  
c Yevusites' Town (that is, Yerushalem), Giv'ath, Qiryath—fourteen towns and their hamlets.

This is the Binyaminites' territory, according to their clan divisions.

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P38 [Ch. 19] The second lot fell to Shim'on—for the Shim'onites' tribe, accord-  
a b ing to their clan divisions. Their territory was contained within the Yehudites' territory. In their territory the following belonged to them:



—Oath Well, Oath, Birthplace, Fox Court, Balah, Bone, Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, Tziqlag, Chariotville, Mare Court, Lionessville, and Sharuhén—thirteen towns and their hamlets.

c

—Spring, Pomegranate, Ether, and Ashan—four towns and their hamlets.

—All the hamlets in the area around these towns as far as Ba'alath Be'er Ramath to the south.

This is the territory of the Shim'onites' tribe, according to their clan divisions. The Shim'onites' territory was part of the land allotted to the Yehudites—because the Yehudites' allotment was too large for them, the Shim'onites' took possession of land within the Yehudites' territory.

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The third lot fell to the Zevulunites, according to their clan divisions. The borders of their territory extend as far as Survivor. Their border goes westwards and then at Mar'elah, reaching Dabbesheth and reaching the wadi east of Yoqne'am. From Survivor it turns back to the east, going alongside Mount Tavor's flanks, extends out to Daverath, and then ascends to Yaphiya. From there it crosses further east, to Gath, Hepher, Ittah, Qatziyn and extending as far as Pomegranate, HamMetho'ar, HanNe'ah. The border then goes around it northwards to Hannathon, with its furthest reaches extending to Yiphtah-El Valley.

P39 a

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Qattath, Nahelal, Shimron, Yid'elah, and Beyth Lehem—twelve towns and their hamlets.

d e

This is the territory of the Zevulunites, according to their clan divisions, along with these towns and their hamlets.

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The fourth lot fell to Yissakar: to the Yissakarites, according to their clan divisions. Their territory included: Yizre'elah, HakKesuloth, Shunem, Hapharayim, Shiy'on, Anaheerath, Harabbiyth, Qishyon, Evetz, Remeth, Spring Gardens, New Spring, and Beyth Patzetz. The territory touches Mount Tavor, Shahetziymah, and Sunville, with their territory's furthest reaches extending to the Yarden—sixteen towns and their hamlets.

P40 a

This is the territory of the Yissakarites' tribe, according to their clan divisions, including towns and their hamlets.

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- P41 The fifth lot fell to the Asherites' tribe, according to their clan divisions. Their borders include: Helqath, Heliy, Beten, Akshaph, Alammelek, Am'ad, and Mish'al, reaching Karmel to the west and reaching the Shiyhor Livnath river. The border then turns back east toward Dagon's Place, touching Zevulun and the northern part of Yiphtah-El Valley, along with Valleytown and Ne'iy'el. It extends to Kavul in the north, along with Evron, Rehov, Hammon, and Qanah, as far as Tziydon Rabbah. The border then turns back toward The Height as far as the town of Tzor's Fortress. The border then turns to Hosah, with its furthest reaches extending west from Hevel to Akziyv, including  
a Umah, Apheq and Rehov—twenty-two towns and their hamlets.

This is the territory of the Asherites' tribe, according to their clan divisions, along with these towns and their hamlets.

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- P42 The sixth lot fell to the Naphtalites: to the Naphtalites according to their clan divisions. Their territory began at Exchange, at Terebrinth in Tza'enanniym, including Adamiy HanNeqev and Yavne'el as far as Laqqum, with its furthest reaches extending to the Yarden. The border then turns back to the west at Aznoth Tavor, whence it goes to Huqoq. It borders Zevulun in the south and it borders Asher in the west and  
a Yehudah (the Yarden) in the east.

Their fortified towns: The Sides, Tzer; Hammath, Raqqath, and Kinnereth; Adamah, The Height, and Hatzor; Qedesh, Edre'iy, and Hatzor's Spring; Yir'on and El's Tower; Herim, Anatville, and Sun-  
b ville—nineteen towns and their hamlets.

This is the territory possessed by the Naphtalites' tribe, according to their clan divisions, including towns and their hamlets.

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- P43 a The seventh lot fell to the Danites' tribe, according to their clan divisions. The territory in their possession included Tzar'ah, Eshta'ol, Sun

City, Sha'elabbiyn, Ayyalon, Yithlah, Eylon, Thimnathah, Eqrn, Elteqeh, Gibbethon, Ba'alath, Yehud, The Bereqites' Town, Pomegranate Press, Green Waters, and HarRaqqon, along with the territory opposite Yepho. The Danites' territory extended from these places. The Danites went and fought with Leshem and captured it, putting it to the slaughter and taking possession of it. They lived there and called the town of Leshem "Dan" after the name of their ancestor.

b

This is the territory possessed by the Danites' tribe, according to their clan divisions, along with these towns and their hamlets.

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Having completed the apportionment of land in accord with its borders, the Yisra'elites gave some of the property in their possession to Yehoshua Nunsson. In keeping with Yahweh's command, they gave him the town he had asked for—Timnath-Serah in the Ephrayim mountains. He established that town and lived there.

P43,1

These are the allotted properties that El'azar the Priest and Yehoshua Nunsson and the family heads of the Yisra'elites' tribes distributed by lot at Shiloh in front of Yahweh at the entrance to the Meeting Tent. And so they completed apportioning out the land.

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"Speak to the Yisra'elites as follows," Yahweh said to Yehoshua. "Designate for yourselves some towns of refuge, which I promised to you through Mosheh, to which a murderer may flee—one who mortally strikes another by accident, without premeditation. They will serve as a refuge for you from anyone seeking blood vengeance. Should one flee to one of these towns, he must stand at the entrance to the town gate and plead his case in public to that town's elders; then they will bring him into the town and give him a place, and he may live with them. If someone seeking blood vengeance comes after him, they won't hand over the murderer to him, for he struck down his colleague without premeditation and hadn't previously acted in an adversarial way with him. He must remain in that town until his case comes before the community to be judged, until the death of the high priest then in office. Then the murderer may return, going back to his town and his family—the town from which he fled.'"

P44 [Ch. 20]

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h They set aside Qedesh in the Galiyl region in the Naphtaliy mountains, Shekem in the Ephrayim mountains, and Arba's Village (that is, Hevron) in the Yehudah mountains. In the region across the Yarden, east of Yeriho, they designated Betzer in the desert in the table lands from the tribe of Re'uven, Ramoth in the Gil'ad region from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in the Bashan region from the tribe of Menashsheh. i These were the towns designated for the Yisra'elites and for the foreigners living among them to which anyone who mortally strikes another by accident may flee and so not die at the hand of the one seeking blood vengeance until his case comes before the community. j k

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P45 [Ch. 21] The heads of the Lewites' families went to see El'azar the Priest and a Yehoshua Nunsson and the family heads of the Yisra'elites' tribes at b Shiloh in Kena'an. "Yahweh commanded through Mosheh that you give us towns to live in," they said to them, "along with their open lands for our cattle."

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P46 And so the Yisra'elites gave the Lewites from their property these towns and their open lands, in accord with Yahweh's command:

a The first lot fell to the Qehathites' clans. Thirteen towns from the tribe of Yehudah, from the Shim'onites' tribe, and from the tribe of Binyamin were made over by lot to the Lewites who were descendants of Aharon the Priest.

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P46,1 Ten towns from the clans of the tribe of Ephrayim, from the tribe of a Dan, and from half the tribe of Menashsheh were then made over by b lot to the remaining Qehathites.

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P46,2 Next, thirteen towns from the clans of the tribe of Yissakar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtaliy, and from the half of the a tribe of Menashsheh living in the Bashan region were made over by lot to the Gershunnites.

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Then twelve towns from the tribe of Re'uvén, from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zevulun were given over to the Merarites, according to their clans.

P46,3

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The Yisra'elites gave the Lewites these towns and their open lands by lot, exactly as Yahweh had commanded through Mosheh.

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P46,4

a

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From the Yehudites' tribe and from the Shim'onites' tribe, they gave over these towns so designated by name:

P47

Those given to the Aharonides (who were Lewites belonging to the Qehathites' clans) [*for the first lot fell to them*]: they gave them Arba's Village [*that is, Hevron*] (Arba was the ancestor of the Anaqis) in the Yehudah mountains and its open lands surrounding it. (However, the countryside around the town and the hamlets there they gave to Kalev Yephunnehsson as his property.)

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To the descendants of Aharon the Priest they gave the town designated as a refuge for those accused of murder—that is, Hevron and its open lands—along with Livnah and its open lands, Yattir and its open lands, Eshtemoa and its open lands, Holon and its open lands, Devir and its open lands, Spring and its open lands, Yuttah and its open lands, Sunville and its open lands—nine towns from these two tribes.

P47,1

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From the tribe of Binyamin: Giv'on and its open lands, Geva and its open lands, Anathoth and its open lands, and Almon and its open lands—four towns.

P47,2

All the towns of the Aharonide priests numbered thirteen, along with their open lands.

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With respect to the Lewites' Qehathite clans (that is, the remaining Qehathites), the towns allotted to them from the tribe of Ephrayim: they gave them the town designated as a refuge for those accused of murder—that is, Shekem and its open lands in the Ephrayim mountains—along with Gezer and its open lands, Qivtzayim and its open lands, and Beyth Horon and its open lands—four towns.

P47,3

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P47,4 From the tribe of Dan: Elteqe and its open lands, Gibbethon and its open lands, Ayyalon and its open lands, and Pomegranate Press and its open lands—four towns.

a From half the tribe of Menashsheh: Ta'nak and its open lands and  
b Pomegranate Press and its open lands—two towns.

The total number of towns given to the clans of the remaining Qehathites: ten, along with their open lands.

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P47,5 To the Gershunnite branch of the Lewites' clans:

From half of the tribe of Menashsheh: the town designated as a refuge for those accused of murder—that is, Golan in the Bashan region and its open lands—and Be'eshterah and its open lands—two towns.

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P47,6 From the tribe of Yissakar: Qishyon and its open lands, Daverath and its open lands, Yarmuth and its open lands, Spring Gardens and its open lands—four towns.

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P47,7 From the tribe of Asher: Mish'al and its open lands, Avdon and its open lands, Helqath and its open lands, and Rehov and its open lands—four towns.

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P47,8 From the tribe of Naphtaliy: the town designated as a refuge for those accused of murder—that is, Qedesh in the Galiyl region and its open lands—along with Hammoth Dor and its open lands, and Qartan and its open lands—three towns.

All the towns of the Gershunnites, according to their clan divisions: thirteen towns and their open lands.

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P47,9 To the Merarites' clans (the rest of the Lewites):

From the tribe of Zevulun: Yoqne'am and its open lands, Qartah and its open lands, Dimnah and its open lands, Nahelal and its open lands—four towns.

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P47,10 From the tribe of Gad: the town designated as a refuge for those accused of murder—that is, Ramoth in the Gil'ad region and its open lands—along with Mahanayim and its open lands, Heshbon and its open lands, Ya'zer and its open lands. Total number of towns: four.

The total number of towns belonging to the Merarites, according to their clan divisions (the last group of the Lewites' clans): their allotment was twelve towns.

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The total number of the Lewites' towns among the lands in the Yisra'elites' possession was forty-eight, including their open lands. These towns are the ones listed, plus the open lands surrounding them—so it was for all these towns.

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And so Yahweh gave Yisra'el all the land that he promised to give to their ancestors—they took possession of it and lived there.

P47,11 a

Yahweh gave them respite from all those surrounding them, just as he had promised their ancestors. Not a single one of their enemies dared to confront them—Yahweh delivered up all their enemies into their hands. Not a single thing of all the good things that Yahweh had promised the nation of Yisra'el failed to happen—all of it came true.

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At that time Yehoshua summoned the Re'ubenites and the Gadites and half of the tribe of Menashsheh. "You have followed everything that Mosheh Yahwehsservant commanded you, and you've obeyed me in everything that I have commanded you. You haven't forsaken your kinsmen this whole time up to the present day, and you have fulfilled the service imposed by your god Yahweh's commandment. And now your god Yahweh has given respite to your kinsmen, just as he promised them. So then, make ready and go on your way back to your tents, back to the land that you took possession of, which Mosheh Yahwehsservant gave you on the other side of the Yarden. However, you must be very careful to carry out the commandment and the teaching that Mosheh Yahwehsservant commanded you—to love your god Yahweh and to follow in all his ways, to observe his commandments and to stay close to him, serving him with all your heart and with your entire being."

P48 [Ch. 22]

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Yehoshua then warmly bid them farewell and sent them on their way, and they went back to their tents.

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P49 a Mosheh gave land in the Bashan to half of the tribe of Menashsheh,  
whereas Yehoshua gave land to the other half of the tribe with their  
b kinsmen west of the Yarden. Moreover, when Yehoshua sent them  
c back to their tents, he bid them a fond farewell. "Go back to your  
d tents with great riches," he said to them, "with extraordinary numbers  
of livestock, with silver and gold, with copper and iron, and with  
copious amounts of garments. Divide the spoils from your enemies  
with your kinsmen!"

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P50 a The Re'uvénites and the Gadites and half of the tribe of Menashsheh  
b once again left the Yisra'élites, departing from Shiloh which is in  
c Kena'an to go to the Gil'ad region, to the land they owned, which they  
took possession of for themselves at the command of Yahweh given  
through Mosheh.

Upon arriving in the districts around the Yarden which were in  
Ken'an, the Re'uvénites, the Gadites and half the tribe of Menashsheh  
built an altar there beside the Yarden, an altar imposing in appear-  
d ance. Shortly thereafter, the Yisra'élites received the news that the  
Re'uvénites, the Gadites, and half of the tribe of Menashsheh had  
e built an altar at the eastern edge of Kena'an in the districts beside the  
f Yarden and right next to the Yisra'élites. Upon learning this, the entire  
community of Yisra'élites convened at Shiloh with the intention of  
going to war with them.

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P51 a The Yisra'élites sent Piynahas El'azarsson the Priest to the Gil'ad  
region to confront the Re'uvénites and the Gadites and half of the tribe  
b of Menashsheh; with him were ten chieftains, one chieftain for each  
ancestral family (that is, for all Yisra'el's tribes), each of whom was his  
c ancestral family's leader for Yisra'el's military divisions. When they  
arrived in the Gil'ad region to meet the Re'uvénites and the Gadites  
and half of the tribe of Menashsheh, they spoke with them in the  
following terms:

d "Yahweh's entire community has sent this message: 'What is this  
damnable treachery that you've committed against Yisra'el's god?!



Turning back today from following Yahweh by building yourselves an altar so that you can now commit rebellion against Yahweh! Wasn't Pe'or's crime bad enough for us (a crime which we haven't cleansed ourselves of yet even now) and the resulting plague that Yahweh's community suffered?! And now you yourselves are going to turn away from Yahweh and make it worse?! Because if you rebel against Yahweh today, tomorrow he'll be enraged at the entire community of Yisra'el! However, if the land in your possession is impure, cross over to the land in Yahweh's possession, where Yahweh's shrine resides, and take possession of land among us! Don't rebel against Yahweh—and don't rebel against us—by building yourselves an altar apart from our god Yahweh's altar! Didn't Akan Zerahsson commit treachery by not honoring the ban devotion? Yahweh's anger was directed at the entire community of Yisra'el, and he was just a single man. He didn't die because of his crime.' "

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"Yahweh is the greatest god! Yahweh is the greatest god!" the Re'uvenites and the Gadites and half of the tribe of Menashsheh said in answer to the heads of Yisra'el's military divisions. "One who is all-knowing, and who personally knows Yisra'el! If we've rebelled or acted with treachery against Yahweh, don't try to save us now or any time!

P51,1 a

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"But if we've built ourselves an altar to turn away from Yahweh—whether by offering up whole offerings and grain offerings on it, or by preparing welfare offerings on it—then let Yahweh himself exact punishment! Indeed, it was because of our anxiety about things that we did this, thinking that in the future your descendants might ask our descendants, 'What is it with you and Yisra'el's god Yahweh? Yahweh put a border between us and you Re'uvenites and Gadites—the Yarden river—so you don't have any territory with Yahweh!' And then your descendants would stop ours from worshipping Yahweh. So we thought we should take matters into our own hands and build an altar—but not for whole offerings or welfare offerings. Rather, it will be a witness for us and for you, and for the generations who come after us, that we will perform the service owed to Yahweh in front of him with our whole offerings, our sacrificial offerings, and our welfare offerings.

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h “Then in the future your descendants won’t say to ours, ‘You don’t have any territory with Yahweh!’ We also thought that when they ask us or in the future ask our descendants, we could say, ‘Look closely at the form of Yahweh’s altar that our ancestors made. It’s not for whole offerings or welfare offerings—rather, it’s simply a witness for us and for you.’ May we be damned if we’ve done this—if we’ve rebelled against Yahweh and turned back from following him just now by building an altar for whole offerings, grain offerings, and welfare offerings that is separate from the altar of our god Yahweh which is in front of his shrine!”

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P52 When Piynehas the Priest, the community’s leaders, and the heads of Yisra’el’s military divisions there with him heard the speech that the Re’uvenites and Gadites and Menashshehites delivered, they were well satisfied.

a “We know now that Yahweh is among us,” Piynehas El’azarsson the Priest said to the Re’uvenites and Gadites and Menashshehites. “Because you haven’t carried out the sort of treachery against Yahweh that we thought you had—rather, you’ve saved the Yisra’elites from Yahweh’s punishment!”

b Then Piynehas El’azarsson the Priest and the leaders took their  
c leave of the Re’uvenites and Gadites, departing the Gil’ad region to go back to Kena’an to the Yisra’elites. When they delivered their report, the Yisra’elites were pleased with the outcome. They gave thanks to  
d God and they no longer thought about going to war with them, to lay waste to the land where the Re’uvenites and Gadites were living.

e The Re’uvenites and Gadites gave the altar the name ‘f g h’, for they thought, “it serves as a witness between us. Indeed, Yahweh is the supreme god!”

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P53 [Ch. 23] A long time after Yahweh had given respite to Yisra’el from their  
a enemies all around them and when Yehoshua had grown old and advanced in years, Yehoshua summoned all of Yisra’el, along with its  
b elders, leaders, judges, and officials.

“I’ve grown old and advanced in years,” he said to them. “You yourselves have seen everything that your god Yahweh has done to all those nations that were in your way—indeed, your god Yahweh was the one fighting for you! Keep in mind, when I felled those nations that remained in the territory designated for your tribes, beginning at the Yarden—and all the nations that I cut down—and the Great Sea to the west, it was really your god Yahweh who was driving them away from you—he was the one dispossessing them and removing them from your path—and then you took possession of their land, just as your god Yahweh promised you.

“So you must remain very firm in observing and doing everything written in Mosheh’s Torah scroll so as not to depart from it in any way at all, in order that you not go among those nations [*those that remain with you*] and that you not call on their gods’ names, neither swearing by them, nor doing service to them, nor worshipping them. Rather, you must stay close to your god Yahweh exactly as you have done up until now. Yahweh has driven out from your path great and mighty nations, while as for you, not a single person has opposed you up until now. A single one of you will put to flight a thousand of them, for your god Yahweh is going to fight for you, just as he promised you. But you must take extra care to love your god Yahweh, for if you turn back from him and cling to the last of those nations [*those that remain with you*], and if you make marriage alliances with them—you going among them and they going among you—then you absolutely must know this: that your god Yahweh won’t drive out these nations from you any more. Instead, they’ll trap and ensnare you, becoming a scourge in your sides and a barb in your eyes until you perish from this bountiful land that your god Yahweh has given you.

“Look, in a little while I’m going to travel down the road that all living things eventually pass down. So I want you to know with all your heart and all your being that not a single thing out of all the good things that your god Yahweh promised regarding you has failed to happen. All of it has come true for you! Not a single one of those things has failed to happen. But it will also be the case that just as every good thing that your god Yahweh promised you has come true, so Yahweh will also bring down upon you every harmful thing, until he wipes you off the face of this excellent land that your god Yahweh has given you, if you violate the terms of the treaty with your god

t Yahweh, which he has ordered you to follow. Should you go and do service to other gods and worship them, then Yahweh's anger will burn against you and you will very quickly disappear from the bountiful land that he has given you."

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P54 [Ch. 24] Yehoshua convened all the tribes of Yisra'el to Shekem, summoning  
a Yisra'el's elders and chiefs, and its judges and officials, and they all  
b took their places in front of God.

"Here is what Yisra'el's god Yahweh says," Yehoshua said to the  
c people. "'Your ancestors of ancient times—Terah, the father of Avra-  
ham and Nahor—lived in the region beyond the Great River and did  
d service to other gods. But I took your ancestor Avraham from the  
region beyond the Great River and I led him everywhere throughout  
e f Kena'an. I made his offspring numerous, giving him Yitzhaq and  
g giving Yitzhaq in turn Ya'aqov and Esaw. To Esaw I gave Mount Se'iy-  
h Then I sent Mosheh and Aharon and defeated Egypt, just as I had done  
within its borders. Afterwards I took you out of there—I took your  
ancestors away from Egypt, and you went toward the sea. And then  
when the Egyptians chased after your ancestors with their chariots  
i and horses to the Reed Sea, they cried out to Yahweh for help. So he  
put a darkness between you and the Egyptians. Then he made the sea  
go on top of them and it covered them.

j "'You saw with your own eyes what I did to Egypt, and you lived  
for a long time in the desert. Then I took you to the country of the  
Amorites who live in the region beyond the Yarden. And when they  
went to war with you, I delivered them into your hands. You took  
possession of their country, and I annihilated them and removed them  
from your path. But Mo'av's king Balaq Tsipporsson immediately  
k went to war with Yisra'el, sending emissaries and summoning Bil'am  
Be'orsson to curse you. However, I wasn't willing to grant Bil'am's  
request and he blessed you instead. And so I saved you from the  
threat that he posed.

l "'Then you crossed the Yarden and arrived at Yeriyo. When  
Yeriyo's citizens—Amorites, Perizzites, Kena'anites, Hethites, and  
Girgashites along with Hiwwites and Yevusites—went to war against

you, I delivered them into your hands. Then I sent a plague in advance of you and it drove them out from your path [*two of the Amorites' kings*]*m*—not because of your swords, and not because of your bows. I gave you land in which you hadn't wearied yourselves to improve and towns that you hadn't built but that you lived in. And you were eating from vineyards and olive groves that you didn't plant.*n*

"So then, revere Yahweh and give service to him with pure intentions and with honesty. Get rid of the gods whom your ancestors gave service to in the region beyond the Great River and in Egypt, and give service to Yahweh! And if you think it's a bad idea to give service to Yahweh, then choose here and now whom you will give service to—whether gods whom your ancestors gave service to, who are in the region beyond the Great River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you're now living. But as for me and my family, we will give service to Yahweh!"*o*  
*p*  
*q*

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"May we be damned if we abandon Yahweh to give service to other gods," the people said in response. "For our god Yahweh is the one who brought us and our ancestors out of Egypt, from our state of servitude, and who performed those tremendous miracles right before our eyes! He kept us safe along every road that we travelled down and among all the peoples through whose lands we crossed. Yahweh drove all the peoples [*that is, the Amorites inhabiting the land*] away from us! So we too shall give service to Yahweh, for he is our god!"*P55*  
*a*  
*b*

"You may not be able to give service to Yahweh," Yehoshua replied to the people, "for he is a very special god. He is a jealous god—he won't forgive your transgressions or your mistakes. If you abandon Yahweh and give service to foreign gods, he will reverse course with you—he'll do harm to you and completely finish you off after he had given you success!"*c*  
*d*

"No!" the people cried to Yehoshua. "We will give service to Yahweh!"

"You yourselves testify," Yehoshua replied to the people, "that you've chosen Yahweh for yourselves, to give service to him!"*e*

"Yes, we are our own witnesses!"

“So then, get rid of the foreign gods that are still with you and turn your hearts to Yisra’el’s god Yahweh!”

“Yes, our god Yahweh is who we’ll give service to!” the people replied to Yehoshua. “He is the one we’ll obey!”

f On that day Yehoshua made a binding agreement with the people, establishing laws and practices for them there in Shekem. Yehoshua wrote those things in the scroll of divine rules, taking a large stone and standing it up there beneath the oak tree that was in Yahweh’s sanctuary.

i

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P56 a “Take note: this stone here will serve as a warning to us,” Yehoshua  
b said to the people. “Because it heard every word that Yahweh spoke  
c with us, it will serve as a warning to you not to forget your god.” Then Yehoshua dismissed the people, sending each person back to his property.

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P57 a b Sometime after these events Yehoshua Nunsson Yahwehsservant died at one hundred and ten years of age. He was buried within his property’s boundaries in Timnath-Serah, just to the north of Mount Ga’ash in the mountains of Ephrayim. Yisra’el did service to Yahweh for Yehoshua’s entire life and for the entire lives of the elders who lived long after Yehoshua and who knew of all Yahweh’s actions that he had done for Yisra’el’s benefit.

c Around the same time, Yoseph’s bones which the Yisra’elites had brought up from Egypt were buried in Shekem in a section of the property that Ya’aqov bought from the sons of Shekem’s founder Hemor for one hundred *qesiytah*, and that came into the Yosephites’ possession.

d Also around this time El’azar Aharonsson died; he was buried  
e in his son Piynehas’ estate, which had been provided to him in the Ephrayim mountains.

f

Total sentences in the book:  
Six hundred and fifty-six

## Notes and comments

This book, like the others I have written, is first and foremost a translation. Because of my personal circumstances—I am employed outside academia and have no access to a university library—I have consulted few sources apart from the Masoretic text and online versions of the standard Hebrew-English lexicon and Hebrew grammar. As I discuss in my introductory note, I have focused principally on how best to bring the prose of the authors of Joshua over into English, striving to produce a fluent translation that is also faithful to the meaning of the Hebrew. My approach here has been similar to my approach in translating the books of the Torah and Samuel. As with those translations, my intention was not to write a traditional Biblical commentary, nor a work of literary or historical criticism. Because my personal circumstances practically forced me to engage with the text solely on my own, without the influence of the standard scholarly views and opinions, I did not consult other translations, nor examine any commentaries, nor—with a small number of exceptions—rely on academic studies and scholarly papers on Joshua in writing this book.

As with the notes in my other translations, I focus many of my comments below on passages that will give readers some understanding of how I employed “functional equivalence” in crafting this translation. Thus, in many places, my comments simply point out what the literal meaning of the text (or what a “formally equivalent” translation) would be. Although biblical scholars might find such notes of little interest, the notes can help those who don’t know Hebrew see how one must depart from the text’s literal meaning in order to create a translation that is functionally equivalent to the source text. In addition, I frequently use the notes to comment on my translation choices when dealing with unusual, idiomatic, or difficult prose. While my comments on these topics are relatively extensive, I have not aimed to be comprehensive and have not necessarily commented on every idiomatic, unusual or difficult passage. Finally, because the act of

translation often required me to consider the composition history of Joshua and its relationship to the books of the Torah—and because there is such scholarly interest in these topics—I comment extensively in the notes on places where I see indications of different authors and different dates. As I discuss in my essay at the end of the book, my comments on composition history are, by necessity, speculative; their value lies primarily in helping the reader appreciate the complexities in the text and in presenting a plausible scenario that explains those complexities.

In many places the language of Joshua presents substantial challenges to the translator. The prose of the book often seems confused and is rife with inconsistencies. These are due both to the book's complex composition history—it shows multiple layers of authorship like the books of the Torah—and due to errors introduced during its transmission history. That said, however, I do not as a general rule try to correct such errors or “fix” places in the text that appear to be corrupt. Consequently, there is no place in this translation where I have intentionally emended the Masoretic consonantal text.

As mentioned in the notes to my previous translations, I did not consult the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* in my translation work, but instead relied on the excellent iPhone app *Tanakh for All* as my source for the Masoretic text. In general, I find the *Tanakh for All* app superior for the purposes of translation, as the line lengths are similar to those in the Aleppo Codex and the Leningrad Codex, and the *parashot petuhot* are prominently marked in the text.

To ensure the accuracy of my source text, I regularly checked my translation against the photographic copy of both the **Aleppo Codex** and the **Leningrad Codex**. Because I have generally found the Aleppo Codex superior to the Leningrad Codex, the placement of the *parashot* in my translation follow the former and not the latter.

The lexicon and grammar that I used were the 1906 edition of Wilhelm Gesenius' *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, as edited and updated by Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles Briggs and the 2nd English edition of *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, as edited and enlarged by E. Kautsch and A.E. Cowley (abbreviated below, respectively, as “BDB” and “GKC”).

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[/https://archive.org/details/Aleppo\\_Codex](https://archive.org/details/Aleppo_Codex)

[/https://archive.org/details/Leningrad\\_Codex](https://archive.org/details/Leningrad_Codex)

[/https://archive.org/details/hebrew\\_geseniushebrew\\_lex00b\\_rowuoft/page/ii](https://archive.org/details/hebrew_geseniushebrew_lex00b_rowuoft/page/ii)

[/https://archive.org/details/hebrew\\_geseniushebrew\\_lex00b\\_rowuoft/page/ii](https://archive.org/details/hebrew_geseniushebrew_lex00b_rowuoft/page/ii)



**1a AFTER MOSHEH YAHWEHSSERVANT DIED, Yahweh spoke to Mosheh's attendant Yehoshua Nunsson:** The opening of the book of Joshua picks up directly from the conclusion to Deuteronomy. The Yisra'elites are in Mo'av, camped on the banks of the Yarden river and are preparing to cross over into Kena'an. Mosheh has just recently transferred leadership to Yehoshua as the people look on (Deut P29,1), written down the Torah (i.e. Deuteronomy) on a scroll and placed it in the treaty chest (Deut P30), sung a song to the people foretelling their apostasy and Yahweh's vengeance on them (Deut P31), and then climbed Mount Nevo to view the promised land before dying there (Deut P35,7).

This opening *parashah* of Joshua belongs to the book's first compositional stage, which I associate with the composition of the original "Deuteronomistic History" and which I date to the early sixth century BCE following the destruction of Yahweh's temple in Yerushalem and the exile of the leading families of the southern kingdom. The *parashah* has many close similarities in language with Deuteronomy and alludes to the narrative framework of Deuteronomy and to key themes of that book.

As I discuss in my introductory note, I believe that the leading officials within Yahweh's cult in Yerushalem conceived of the work that we today call the Deuteronomistic History to address the crisis within the cult created by the loss of political sovereignty, exile from the land, and destruction of Yahweh's temple. This was such an ambitious project that they must have commissioned a number of authors (who likely were a mix of individuals from the cult and from the royal court) to write the individual books of their history. They almost certainly gave the authors whom they commissioned guidance on subject matter and themes and perhaps sources, but otherwise these authors seem to have had a fair amount of latitude in how they approached their task. To help unify the books and to ensure that there was some thematic consistency in them, there must have been a lead editor or group of lead editors who edited and approved what the books' principal authors wrote. It was also this lead editor (or editors) who wrote key speeches appearing in each book in order to reinforce the major themes of the individual books and of the larger history. Within the book of Joshua, the two speeches that I attribute specifically to the lead editors of the Deuteronomistic History are this opening *parashah* (P1) and P53 (the concluding speech in the original version of the book).

The project of the Deuteronomistic History required the composition of five new books, which were attached to an expanded version of the book of Deuteronomy to form the history. I believe that the individuals who expanded Deuteronomy were almost certainly also the "lead editors" who oversaw the composition of the other books and who wrote and inserted key passages in the other books to help unify the work thematically. Originally, then, the history would have been recorded on six scrolls: (1) a scroll narrating the period of slavery in Egypt and the years in the wilderness (this included the plagues, the escape from Egypt, the treaty at Siynai, and the subsequent wilderness wandering) that ultimately became the books of Exodus and Numbers; (2) a revision and expansion of the Torah scroll (that is, Deuteronomy) to accommodate the narrative of the history; (3) a scroll narrating the conquest and allotment of the land to the Yisra'elites (the early layer of Joshua); (4) a scroll narrating the period of the judges, prior to the establishment of the monarchy (the book of Judges); (5) a scroll narrating the establishment of the monarchy, the origins of the

Davidic dynasty, and the selection of Mount Zion as the “place that Yahweh chooses” (the book of Samuel); and (6) a scroll narrating the construction of Yahweh’s temple, the division of the people into two kingdoms, and the history of each kingdom until its downfall (the book of Kings).

With regard to the surname “Yahwehsservant” in the opening sentence: In ancient Hebrew, surnames were commonly patronyms, gentilics, or occupation names. In recognition of Mosheh’s special role, the Deuteronomistic authors in the account of his death in Deut P35,7 bestow upon him the honorific surname “Yahwehsservant,” which can be thought of as a sort of occupation name. The use of this honorific surname here and elsewhere in Joshua is an intentional allusion to Deuteronomy—an allusion which the authors of this *parashah* would have expected their readers to recognize immediately. On a related note, the use of the surname “Yahwehsservant” for Mosheh throughout the book of Joshua (it is applied seven times to Mosheh in the material from the first compositional stage) indicates that Deut P35,7 was part of the original Deuteronomistic History, and not a Persian period addition as some scholars have proposed.

Lastly, it is worth commenting on the fact that Yahweh “speaks” to Yehoshua. It is noteworthy that exactly how Yahweh communicates with Yehoshua is left unsaid. In later layers of the books of the Torah, Yahweh speaks to Mosheh in the Meeting Tent. However, in the earliest layer of Exodus and Numbers (which I believe were originally composed as part of the Deuteronomistic History), the Meeting Tent is entirely absent and Yahweh speaks directly to Mosheh (that is, “face to face”). The same is true here: the Meeting Tent is absent in the early material in Joshua and in the entirety of the Deuteronomistic History, and so we must assume that the authors understood Yahweh to speak to Yehoshua through other means, even if it was not “face to face.”

**1b [to the Yisra’elites]:** Throughout this translation, I use brackets and italics to indicate text that I understand to be late glosses and comments on the text. I believe that most of these glosses and comments were added to the text as part of the work in the final compositional stage of Joshua, sometime between the mid-fourth and late third centuries BCE.

**1c Every place where the soles of your feet step... as far as the Great Sea to the west:** These two sentences are near verbatim quotes from a passage in Deut P12,3, and the author would have expected his audience to pick up on the allusion to Deuteronomy. It is important to note that the boundaries of the land in this speech are consistent with those given in Deuteronomy. It is also important to note that the boundaries of the land defined here are larger than the land that was “promised to the ancestors.” The land promised to the ancestors is the land of Kena’an, all of which is west of the Yarden. The authors of the Deuteronomistic History must account for the fact that two tribes—Re’uven and Gad—inhabit regions east of the Yarden (as I discuss below, the eastern Menashshehites were not included in the original version of the Deuteronomistic History). Thus, they have written the speeches here and in Deut P12,3 to show that Yahweh has expanded the land given to the Yisra’elites—it is not only the land that was promised (that is, Kena’an), but also includes any land “where the soles of your feet step” (that is, the region east of the Yarden that the Re’uvenites

and Gadites wished to take because it was good land for their livestock).

**1d just as I said to Mosheh:** The omission of a reference of the promise to Avraham, Yitzhaq, and Ya'aqov is notable. The earliest versions of the books of the Deuteronomistic History (which I understand to include Exodus and Numbers) purposefully made no mention of the patriarchs of Genesis. The Deuteronomistic History was produced by authors from Yehudah, and while they likely were aware of the existence of some early version of Genesis (which was a book originating in the Samaritan cult), they never acknowledge the book and the individuals and events described in it, very likely because its principal character Ya'aqov was morally ambiguous.

For an insightful discussion of Ya'aqov's problematic character, see A. de Pury, "[The Jacob Story and the Beginning of the Formation of the Pentateuch](#)," in T. Dozeman and K. Schmid (eds.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 51-72.

**1e the Great River [*the River Perath*]:** The name of the Euphrates river in ancient Hebrew was the Perath river, but it was commonly referred to as "the Great River" or simply "the River." The phrase "the River Perath" is a late gloss and is not original to the text.

**1f (the entire country of the Hethites):** This phrase is absent from the parallel text in Deuteronomy. It is unclear whether the phrase is original to the text or is a later gloss, although I lean to the latter view. The phrase clarifies that the area being described—the desert land between Mo'av in the south and the Lebanon in the north and extending east to the Great River (roughly all of central and southern Syria on present-day maps)—is the Hethites' land.

**1g No man will challenge your position:** More literally, "No man will oppose you." The phrase **לפני הציב** ("to stand oneself in front of") is used idiomatically in two different ways. Here it means "oppose, confront." Its other idiomatic use has the meaning "present oneself in an audience with a superior." For another example of the phrase with the meaning of "oppose, confront," note the beginning of Deut [P10](#): "Who is willing to oppose [or confront] the Anaqi?"

In the parallel text in Deut [P12,3](#), the phrase "no man will dare oppose you" clearly refers to Yisra'el. Here in Josh P1, however, the author has altered this language to make it refer to Yehoshua himself in support of the theme of Yehoshua's greatness, which is one of the key themes of the book. See note 1h directly below.

**1h I will be with you just as I was with Mosheh:** The authors of the earliest version of Joshua present Yehoshua as a worthy successor to, and near equal of, Mosheh, and they take care throughout their narrative to make connections and draw parallels between Yehoshua and Mosheh in order to elevate Yehoshua's status. One of the ways they do this is to state that Yahweh was with Yehoshua just as he "was with Mosheh." In the speech here in P1, the phrase is used to bolster Yehoshua's confidence that he will be successful in giving the Yisra'elites possession of the land that they have been promised. This language is used in a similar fashion in the speech of the eastern Yisra'elite tribes to Yehoshua at the end of P3. The phrase is also used in P5,1, where the miraculous crossing of the Yarden is said to demonstrate Yehoshua's greatness

and to demonstrate that Yahweh is with Yehoshua. On a final note, Yahweh is said to be with Yehoshua (but with no comparison to Mosheh) after the great victory over Yeriho in P13,1. See also my comments in note 5,1a below.

**1i I won't let you down and I won't abandon you. So be strong and have courage:**

Note the dependency of this passage on Mosheh's speech of encouragement to Yehoshua about his ability to give the people possession of the land in Deut P29,1 and the use of identical language there. The "be strong and have courage" language and its counterpart—"don't be afraid and don't be discouraged"—are used as a sort of refrain in the conquest narrative (P1 - P24,31) to reinforce the theme of trusting that Yahweh will uphold his end of the treaty terms and will enable his people to defeat their foes. Other places this language is found in Joshua are the end of P1, the end of P3, the beginning of P14, the beginning of P19, and the beginning of P23. The language in each of these places reinforces the connection to Deut P29,1.

**1j you shall give this people possession of the land that I promised their ancestors:**

Yahweh's speech to Yehoshua that opens the book establishes the book's theme: Yehoshua is to give the people possession of the land (through leading the conquest and then apportioning out the land to the tribes). Again, the author is alluding to Deut P29,1 and he expects his readers to pick up on the allusion.

It is also important to note that, for our author, Yehoshua will only succeed in his endeavor by acting in accord with everything in the Torah (i.e. the book of Deuteronomy) that Mosheh commanded him and the people. See note 1l below.

**1k you must be very strong and show great courage:** I understand the adverb מאד ("very, much") to modify both verbs in this sentence. Note again the use of language from Deut P29,1. See note 1i above.

**1l being sure to act in accord with the entirety of the Torah that my servant Mosheh commanded you:** This is a direct allusion to Deut P29, and it is an indirect allusion to the requirement of making a ban devotion of the land's native inhabitants. See note 29c of my translation of Deuteronomy. On the role of the ban devotion in the conquest narrative, see my comments in the translator's note to the reader on pp. ix-xii.

It is important to point out that the authors of the earliest version of the Deuteronomistic History understood "the Torah that Mosheh commanded" to refer only to the book of Deuteronomy. I understand the Deuteronomistic History at this time to have consisted of Exodus-Numbers (then a single book), Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. In this earliest version of Exodus-Numbers, there were only the ten commandments and no other laws or precepts. (I believe the legal material in Exodus found in P36 - P39,5 was added in a later compositional stage. See my discussion of those *parashot* in my translation of Exodus.)

**1m This Torah scroll:** The authors of the earliest compositional stage of Joshua (which includes this *parashah*) refer to the book of Deuteronomy as "the Torah scroll" (ספר ההורח) or "Mosheh's Torah scroll" (ספר תורת משה).

**1n you must recite it day and night:** Note that Yehoshua is required to recite the book of Deuteronomy "day and night," just as the king in Deut P18,1 is required to recite

a copy of the Torah scroll “every day of his life.” The author would have expected his audience to be aware of the passage in Deut P18,1, and almost certainly wanted the reader to understand that all leaders of the Yisra’elites—kings and non-kings alike—were required to recite the Torah (that is, the book of Deuteronomy) on a daily basis.

**1o Take assurance that:** Literally, “Haven’t I . . . ?” The interrogative particle הלא is sometimes used in Hebrew to direct the attention of the person being addressed to the words that follow. The most natural translation in English in these situations is often “take note.” Here, however, I have translated as “take assurance” to reflect the tone of the conclusion of Yahweh’s speech to Yehoshua.

**2a the camp:** The use of the term *מחנה* (“camp”) indicates a clear connection to the narratives of Exodus and Numbers, which use the term to refer to the Yisra’elites’ encampment in their journey through the wilderness from Egypt to Kena’an. The narrative of Joshua presupposes the narratives of both Exodus and Numbers and has a fundamental dependence on the latter book. As I argue in my books on Exodus and Numbers, I understand the earliest version of Exodus-Numbers to have been composed in the early sixth century BCE as part of the composition of the Deuteronomistic History.

Notes to P2

**2b \*\*:** The Leningrad Codex has a *parashah setumah* here.

**3a half the tribe of Menashsheh:** I understand this phrase to be a later addition to the text, made as part of the Samaritan editorial work in the third compositional stage. As I argue in my translation of Numbers, in the earliest version of Exodus-Numbers (and of the Deuteronomistic History), only the Re’uvenites and Gadites received land east of the Yarden. I believe the insertion of the mention of the Menashshehites living east of the Yarden was made at the insistence of the Samaritans, who wanted the entire tribe of Menashsheh to be included as part of Yahweh’s people.

Notes to P3

**3b Remember what Mosheh Yahwehsservant commanded you:** This is an allusion to Mosheh’s speech to the Re’uvenites and Gadites in Numbers P87. (In the earliest version of Num P87, there was no mention of the Menashshehites.)

**3c let you settle down:** Literally, “give you rest, respite.”

**3d fifty-man battalions** BDB, p. 332, understands *חֲמִשִּׁים* here to mean “in battle array.” However, the same consonants with a slightly different vocalization (*חֲמִשִּׁים*) are the term for a fifty-man battalion, which was a standard fighting unit within the military organization used in ancient Yisra’el and Yehudah. The term used here—*חֲמִשִּׁים*—is rare, and it is possible to understand all instances of it as an irregular plural form of the singular *חֲמִשִּׁים* (“fifty-man battalion”).

I believe this term also appears in Num P86,2, although there my translation followed BDB. Now I would translate, “Then we will arm ourselves in fifty-man battalions, going in advance of the Yisra’elites.” See note 86,2a in my translation of Numbers for understanding *חֲמִשִּׁים* as an error for *חֲמִשִּׁים*.

**3e the land that Mosheh Yahwehsservant gave you in the region opposite the Yarden:** An allusion to the story in Numbers [P86](#) - [P87](#).

**3f we know Yahweh will be with you just as he was with Mosheh:** I have translated the particle רק ("only, indeed") with the phrase "we know" to reflect the nuance that the particle has here. Note the repetition of the theme established in P1 that Yehoshua is a worthy successor to and near equal to Mosheh. See note 1h above.

**3g be strong and have courage!:** Note the repetition of the theme that Yehoshua must be strong and have courage in leading the Yisra'elites in the conquest of the land. See note 1h above.

#### Notes to P4

**4a the Yisra'elites' camp in Shittiyim:** I have added the phrase "the Yisra'elites' camp in" to clarify the situation to the reader. The author expects the reader to be familiar with the tradition that the final camping site of the Yisra'elites before entering Kena'an was at Shittiyim. Shittiyim is mentioned in Numbers in [P73](#) (part of the earliest version of Numbers) and again in the wilderness itinerary at the end of [P88,1](#) (which is from the final compositional stage of Numbers, but which likely reflects very old traditions).

**4b to the king's messengers:** This phrase is not in the Hebrew, and is not required as the ancient reader would have naturally understood the king's messengers to be the recipients of Rahav's response. I have added the phrase because in the context given here, natural English usage requires some indication of who is addressed.

**4c Anyway, the men already left, as they knew the town gate was going to be shut at dark:** Somewhat more literally, "The town gate is regularly shut at dark; meanwhile the men left." The meaning of the Hebrew is deceptively simple. Ancient Hebrew regularly juxtaposes two clauses and leaves it up to the reader to deduce the relationship between the two clauses based on the larger narrative context. In the situation here, I understand Rahav's phrasing to imply that the men were aware of the usual timing of when the town gate was shut, and that they made their exit before then so as not to get caught in the town overnight. I have connected the juxtaposed clauses with the phrase "as they knew."

**4d the stalks of flax that had been set out for her to dry on the roof:** Dried flax stalks are used to make linen. After harvesting, flax stalks must be dried in the sun for a week to ten days. They are commonly dried in standing bundles, which allows for more even drying than laying the bundles flat. (The standing bundles are known as stooks, and the process of drying the standing bundles is called stooking.) The author of P4 likely intended the reader to imagine the men were hiding behind or under the stooks, as it would be difficult for men to hide among flax bundles that had been laid out flat.

**4e I know that Yahweh has given you this country...:** Rahav's speech in this paragraph is noteworthy for its references to the events in Exodus and Numbers, as these are not needed to advance the narrative of the story. The author, however, is writing as part of a larger historical work, and he weaves in these allusions to the previous parts of this work (which he assumes his audience is familiar with) to make

the reader see the events of Joshua within the overall narrative sweep of the history in which Yahweh continually displays his might against foreigners. It is likely, in my opinion, that this section of Rahav's speech was written or heavily edited by the lead editors of the Deuteronomistic History (see note 1a above for my views on their editorial activity).

**4f how Yahweh dried up the waters of the Reed Sea:** An allusion to the story in Exodus P23 - P26 (it is in P24 specifically that Yahweh "turned the sea into dry ground").

**4g what you did to two of the Amorites' kings... Sihon and Og:** An allusion to the story in Numbers P72; the story is also recounted in Deut P1,3 - P1,4, which I view as belonging to the earliest version of the Deuteronomistic History.

**4h whom you slaughtered and put to the ban devotion:** This is the first mention in Joshua of the ban devotion (חרם), a concept which serves as the organizing principle of the first half of the book. See my treatment of this topic in the introductory note to the reader on pp. ix-xii.

It is worth pointing out that although the passage in Numbers P72 that describes the defeat of Sihon and Og does not make mention of the ban devotion, the passage recounting the defeat of the two kings in Deut P1,4 does state that the Yisra'elites made a ban devotion of both kings and their peoples. It is also important to note that the law of war in Deuteronomy P19,4 declares that the ban devotion applies to "the towns of those peoples whose lands your god Yahweh is going to give you." That is to say, the ban devotion applies both to towns in Kena'an, and to towns across the Yarden in the former kingdoms of Sihon and Og. Thus the application of the ban devotion to Og and Sihon in Rahav's speech here is in keeping with the law in Deuteronomy.

Because the Yisra'elites' performance of the ban devotion in Joshua is presented as being entirely in accord with the commandment regarding the ban devotion in Deut P19,4, it is worth commenting briefly on the exact language used in the passage in Deuteronomy. The relevant passage states, "with respect to the towns of those peoples whose lands your god Yahweh is going to give you, you mustn't spare a living soul (לא תחיה כל-נשמה). When I translated Deuteronomy, I followed BDB, p. 675, which suggests that נשמה here means "breathing thing," and I thus translated נשמה as "living thing" rather than "living soul." However, in Josh P21,1 and Josh P23,1, the context in which נשמה is used makes it clear that the term refers to human beings only and not animals (see notes 21,1c and 23,1b below). The issue is confusing because in addition to requiring the slaughter of the person being banned, the ban devotion also often (although not always) requires the destruction of all the banned person's possessions, which includes not only other family members but also any livestock owned by the person. Thus we see in Josh P13,2 that when Akan Zerahsson is subjected to the ban devotion, his family and his livestock are killed with him and then they and all Akan's possessions are immolated. Similarly, in Deut P13,2, when an apostate town is put to the ban devotion, everything in the town, including livestock, is destroyed through burning.



**4i supreme:** Here the use of אֱלֹהִים (typically translated as “god” or “God”) seems to be a rare use of the “majestic plural.” A more literal translation would thus be “a supreme god.” On the majestic plural, see GKC §124*g-i*.

**4j we would even be willing to die for you and your family:** The author uses an idiomatic phrase in Hebrew, and I have had to depart far from the literal meaning to capture the sense in natural English. A literal translation of the Hebrew is, “our life in place of you all with respect to dying.”

**4k But know that in certain circumstances:** This phrase is not in the Hebrew. I have added it as natural English usage requires the speaker to provide context for the statements that follow, whereas such context is not required in Hebrew.

**4l They concluded by telling Yehoshua that...:** It’s worth noting that the two points the men make to Yehoshua—that their scouting expedition has led them to believe that Yahweh has given the country to the Yisra’elites, and that the local inhabitants are terrified of the Yisra’elites—repeat the same two points that Rahav made in her speech to them before she had them swear an oath to her.

#### Notes to P4,1

**4,1a Yahweh’s treaty chest:** This is the first mention of the treaty chest in Joshua. The author’s use of the term without further explanation indicates that the author presumes his audience is familiar with early material in Exodus-Numbers and Deuteronomy, which uses the same terminology, and it is further evidence of Joshua’s dependence on those books. Note also that in Num [P47,1](#) (from the book’s first compositional stage), the treaty chest functions in a similar fashion, going in advance of the people. (The passages in Numbers in which the treaty chest travels in a middle position are from later compositional stages.)

**4,1b which the Lewites priests will be carrying:** I understand this phrase to be an addition made by Lewite priestly authors who were responsible for the editorial work that I assign to the second compositional stage of Joshua.

**4,1c two thousand cubits:** There are two types of cubits mentioned in the Tanakh—the “short” cubit and the “long” cubit. The short cubit was six handbreadths (or twenty-four fingerbreadths) long, equivalent to approximately 17-18 inches or a little less than half a meter. The long cubit was seven handbreadths (or twenty-eight fingerbreadths), equivalent to 20-21 inches or a little more than half a meter. The short cubit is referred to as “the old standard” in the book of Chronicles, and it is probably the short cubit that the author of P4,1 has in mind here. Thus, two thousand short cubits is in today’s standards a little more than half a mile, or a little less than one kilometer. For a good summary of the weights and measures used in the Tanakh, see the article “[Weights & Measures](#)” in the Jewish Virtual Library.

**4,1d Don’t get too close to it, so that you might become acquainted with the road:** The author’s point seems to be that by staying well behind the treaty chest (but still keeping it within sight), the Yisra’elites will be able to see clearly the twists and turns of the road ahead of them.



4,1e \*\*: The Leningrad Codex has a *parashah setumah* here.

**5a “Consecrate yourselves... for tomorrow Yahweh will do wondrous deeds in your presence!”:** I understand the first sentence of this *parashah* to be an addition made by the authors of the second compositional stage. I believe the authors have modeled the command for the Yisra’elites to consecrate themselves on the passage in Numbers P49, in which Yahweh tells Mosheh to have the people purify themselves in preparation for the miracle of the quail meat on the following day. The authors of the second stage may also have had in mind Exodus P33, in which Yahweh commands Mosheh to consecrate the Yisra’elites prior to Yahweh’s coming to the Yisra’elites “in a cloud of smoke” and speaking to them from Mount Siynai. The author of this addition in Joshua understood Yahweh as somehow being “present” in the miraculous cutting off of the flow of the Yarden. Just as individuals presenting an offering in their god’s shrine must be ritually pure because they are in their god’s presence, so the Yisra’elites must make themselves ritually pure (that is, “consecrate themselves”) because they will be in Yahweh’s presence when he performs “wondrous deeds”—whether that be stopping the flow of the Yarden, inundating the people with billions of quail, or appearing on Mount Siynai in a cloud of smoke.

**Note to P5**

One indication that the first sentence of this *parashah* is not original to Joshua is that the time of the crossing is inconsistent with the surrounding *parashot*. In P2, Yehoshua tells the people’s leaders that the people will cross the Yarden in three days, and then P4,1 indicates that three days have now passed, meaning that the Yisra’elites will cross that day. This is incongruous with the statement in the opening sentence of P5 that Yahweh will do wondrous deeds “tomorrow.” The confused chronology in P5 is likely the result of the author modeling his addition on Num P49 and Exod P33, in which the people are consecrated in advance of the miracle/theophany and not on the day of the miracle/theophany itself.

**5,1a “Today is the day that I begin to make you great...:** I understand this *parashah* as part of the first compositional stage of the book of Joshua. The authors of this stage saw Yehoshua as a worthy successor to Mosheh (a theme they establish in P1), and they take care throughout their narrative to make connections and draw parallels between Yehoshua and Mosheh in order to elevate Yehoshua’s status. In this *parashah* the authors focus on laying the groundwork for the water miracle associated with Yehoshua, and wish their readers to see the obvious parallel with Mosheh and the water miracle associated with him. It is through the water miracle at the Yarden that Yahweh begins to make Yehoshua great in Yisra’el’s eyes, just as it was through the water miracle at the Reed Sea that Yahweh made Mosheh great in their eyes. Note the conclusion of the Reed Sea narrative in Exodus P25: “When Yisra’el saw the tremendous power that Yahweh had worked against Egypt, the people feared Yahweh, trusting in him and his servant Mosheh.” This is the first time in the Exodus narrative that the Yisra’elites are explicitly said to have a wholly positive opinion of Mosheh. Note that prior to this in the narrative, their opinion of him can be quite negative—see, for example, the last part of Exod P6 and the last part of Exod P23.

**Note to P5,1**

**6a** [*"This," Yehoshua said... the Yevusites.*]: This sentence is incongruous with the surrounding material and I believe it is an addition to the text. Possibly it was added in the final compositional stage, when the authors may have been bothered by the absence of a statement from Yehoshua to the Yisra'elites that Yahweh will drive out the native peoples once they cross the Yarden. The authors almost certainly modeled their insertion here on the beginning of Deut P6,4, where a very similar statement appears.

**6b** *the Kena'anites, the Hethites... the Amorites, and the Yevusites*: This language is borrowed directly from Deuteronomy, which alludes in two places to these peoples as the native inhabitants of the land that Yahweh will give to the Yisra'elites. See Deut P6,4 and P19,4. It is worth noting that the subject of the passage in P19,4 in which these peoples are mentioned is the requirement to put them to the ban devotion. See note 4h above.

**6c** *the [treaty] chest of the lord of the entire earth*: The Hebrew is grammatically incorrect with a definite article placed on a word in construct. The grammatical error is due to the phrase "the treaty" having been inserted as a gloss on "chest" to indicate to the reader that this is the treaty chest. Originally, the text would have read "the chest of the lord of the entire earth." I have translated "treaty" within brackets to show the gloss and capture the incongruity of the Hebrew.

It is interesting to note that the original author of this *parashah* does not use the phrase "treaty chest;" rather, he calls it "the chest" or "Yahweh's chest" or "the chest of the lord of the entire earth." It is the authors of the fifth compositional stage, I believe, who have added glosses in three places in the *parashah* to clarify that this is the "treaty chest." I understand the concept of the treaty chest to be an invention of the authors of the Deuteronomistic History of the early sixth century BCE, who took the old concept of Yahweh's "battle chest" and repurposed it as the repository of Yahweh's treaty with the Yisra'elites at Siynai. Because the idea of a "treaty chest" was invented specifically for the Deuteronomistic History, we often see authors of the early material in the Deuteronomistic History referring to the chest without any connection to the treaty, as in their minds this is still the "battle chest." This is most notable in the book of Samuel, whose author has fashioned much of the first part of his narrative around old traditions about Yahweh's battle chest. By the Persian period, however, the connection to the old idea of the battle chest had been greatly attenuated, and the authors of that period consistently use the terminology "treaty chest"—either *ארון הברית* or *ארון העדות*.

**6d** [*So then, select...from each tribe.*]: I believe this sentence is most likely an addition from the final compositional stage of the book. In the earliest layer, Yahweh's command to Yehoshua to select twelve men is given in P7, but Yehoshua never relays this information to the Yisra'elites prior to summoning them in P7,1. The authors of the final compositional stage may have been bothered by this omission, and so added the command to select twelve men in Yehoshua's speech to the Yisra'elites in P6. It is interesting to note that this addition creates its own problem—Yehoshua now relays the command before he himself receives it—but presumably the authors of the addition were not comfortable creating an entirely new speech after P7 to relay the

command, and so resorted to the speech in P6, despite the problem in narrative logic.

**6e the waters of the river will be cut off... and the waters will stand in one gigantic heap:** The author portrays the crossing of the Yarden as a great miracle on par with the drying up of the Reed Sea when the Yisra'elites left Egypt (see Exodus P24 - P25). The two water miracles can be thought of as bookends marking the beginning and end of the Yisra'elites' journey from Egypt to their new home in Kena'an. As I discuss elsewhere, the narrative of Joshua presupposes many events from Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and in writing their narrative Joshua's authors assume the reader is also familiar with those books. This set of facts is best explained, in my opinion, if we presume that Exodus, Numbers and Joshua were originally composed as part of a single larger work (the collection of books that scholars call the Deuteronomistic History), in which a narrative of the history of Yisra'el's early relationship with Yahweh was placed in front of Deuteronomy and a narrative of the history of this relationship during the period that the Yisra'elites possessed the land was placed after Deuteronomy.

**6f the [treaty] chest:** The word הברית ("the treaty") has been inserted as a gloss on "chest." See note 6c above.

**6g as far back as Adam:** We have no way of knowing the distance involved, but we can presume that it was at least two or three kilometers. The author seems to visualize the water piling up into a gravity-defying heap within the Yarden's banks rather than spreading out behind the Yisra'elites like a lake behind a dam, and in the author's mind, the heap of water clearly extended back upstream for a significant distance.

**6h the [Yahweh's treaty] chest:** The grammar of the Hebrew is incorrect, with the definite article placed on the word for chest (ארון) even though the word is in construct. The grammatical error is the result of the phrase "Yahweh's treaty" being added as a gloss to "the chest." See notes 6c and 6f above.

**6i As soon as the nation has finished crossing the Yarden...:** The *parashah* break that follows is a good example of the use of a *parashah petuhah* to introduce a speech of Yahweh. It is also noteworthy that the *parashah* here marks an ellipsis, which is another common use of both the *parashah petuhah* and the *parashah setumah*.

**7a from the place where the priests have fixed their feet:** This clause provides a good example of the departures one must make from a literal rendering to produce natural-sounding English. Literally, "from the standing-place of the priests' feet [which are] firmly [fixed in position]."

**Note to P7**

**7,1a who had been appointed from the Yisra'elites:** The Hebrew literally reads, "whom he had appointed from the Yisra'elites." However, the third-person singular verb here—"he had appointed" (הכין)—is ambiguous. It may simply refer to Yehoshua, which is the easiest way to read the text. One problem with this reading, however, is that it creates an inconsistency in the narrative: at the end of the previous *parashah*, the command to select twelve men from the people is in the plural—that is, it is a command for the leaders of each tribe to select one person to represent the tribe. The

**Notes to P7,1**

other way to read the verb here, which is the option I have chosen, is to understand the subject as indefinite. The passive voice is much less common in ancient Hebrew than in modern English. Ancient Hebrew speakers often avoided the passive by using an active verb with an indefinite subject in its place. That is how I understand the usage here, and I have thus translated with the passive. On the phenomenon of an active verb with an indefinite subject representing the passive, see my discussion in note 9b of my translation of Leviticus.

**7,1b wherever you are:** The author here uses the phrase **בְּקִרְבְּכֶם** (literally, “in your midst”). This phrase is frequently used by the authors of Deuteronomy with the meaning “in your community,” and that is exactly how the phrase is used here in Joshua. This is another instance of the linguistic influence of Deuteronomy appearing in Joshua and indicating some commonality of authorship or, as I believe most likely, editorial oversight. I have translated the phrase here in Joshua as “wherever you are” to express the idea in natural English. See note 21,5b in my translation of Deuteronomy.

**7,1c in the future when your children ask:** It’s worth nothing that the literary device of a “sign” that children ask about in the future is also used by the authors of the passover narrative in Exodus in two places: Exod P18 and Exod P22. It’s especially noteworthy that in both these passages in Exodus, the author alludes to the narrative of Joshua, using the phrase “when you enter the land that Yahweh is going to give you” in Exod P18 and the phrase “when Yahweh brings you into the Kena’anites’ land” in Exod P22. These sorts of connections between Exodus and Joshua (of which there are many) are best explained, in my opinion, by understanding both books to have been originally written as part of a larger historical project that we now call the Deuteronomistic History. The earliest version of these books had different principal authors, but had a common lead editor (or editors), who developed common themes and links in the books in the very earliest version.

**7,1d because of Yahweh’s treaty chest:** An equally plausible translation is “from in front of Yahweh’s treaty chest.”

**7,1e [*At the same time...to the present day.*]:** I understand the text I have placed within brackets to be a later addition to the text, likely added in the final compositional stage. I presume the authors of that stage knew of an alternative tradition about the twelve stones, which they wished to preserve here.

**7,1f in keeping with everything that Yehoshua had commanded Mosheh:** I believe this is an allusion to Mosheh’s speech to Yehoshua in Deut P29,1 in which he tells Yehoshua in front of the people that he will lead them into Kena’an.

**7,1g exactly as Mosheh had told them to:** This is a reference to the command that Mosheh gives the Re’uvenites and the Gadites (and, thanks to a later addition to the text, to half the tribe of Menashsheh) in Num P87, when he tells them that they must fight in Kena’an until their enemies have been dispossessed and the land is subdued.

**7,1h Approximately forty thousand:** This refers to all the males of fighting age in the tribes of Re’uven and Gad wishing to take land east of the Yarden. The reference to half the tribe of Menashsheh here in P7,1 is an addition from the third stage (see note 3a above). The number forty thousand is part of the earliest material in Joshua, and is at odds with the census material in Numbers, which dates to a later compositional stage. In that final census in Numbers, the males of fighting age numbered 43,730 for the tribe of Re’uven (see Num P76) and 40,500 for the tribe of Gad (see Num P76,2). It’s also worth noting that the males of fighting age numbered 52,700 for the entire tribe of Menashsheh (see Num P76,6).

**7,1i in front of Yahweh:** That is, in front of the treaty chest. In the early material in Numbers, the treaty chest travels in the vanguard (see Num P47,1). But now that that Yisra’elites are in Kena’an and will need to fight the native inhabitants, the Re’uvenites and Gadites (and, as added in the third stage, half the Menashshehites) will be in the vanguard.

**7,2a On that day Yahweh made Yehoshua preeminent in the Yisra’elites’ eyes:** This short *parashah* connects back to P5,1. The authors of the first compositional stage used these two *parashot* to frame the story of the crossing of the Yarden and water miracle there—and also to make an explicit connection between the greatness of Yehoshua and the greatness of Mosheh (on these authors’ use of the theme of Yehoshua’s greatness, see note 1h above). In the earliest version of the book of Joshua, P7,2 served as the conclusion to the story of the crossing of the Yarden. The material in P8, which is also about the crossing of the Yarden, is from the second compositional stage (see note 8a below).

Notes to P7,2

**7,2b for his entire life:** Based on the word order of the Hebrew, this clause can also refer to Mosheh rather than Yehoshua. I have a slight preference for understanding it as referring to Yehoshua, as in the early material in Exodus and Numbers, there are numerous instances of the Yisra’elites complaining against and challenging Mosheh. In Exodus, for example, see P27,2 (the introduction to the story of the Yisra’elites eating *man*), P29 (the rebellion over the lack of water at Rephiydim) and P51,1 (the story of the golden bull calf). In Numbers, the most prominent example is the rebellion of Dathan, Aviyram and On in P60 and P60,2 (but both these *parashot* were heavily revised by the Aharonide authors late in the composition history of Numbers; see the discussion of this material in my translation of Numbers).

It is also worth noting that if we understand “his entire life” here in P7,2 to refer to Yehoshua, then the portrayal of him in P7,2 has a clear connection to P1, where Yahweh tells Yehoshua that “no man will challenge your position for as long as you live.”

**8a Command the priests carrying the treaty chest. . . :** I understand this entire *parashah* to be an addition from the second compositional stage (the principal authors of which I believe were priests in Yahweh’s cult at Mount Zion). There are a number of indications that this *parashah* dates to the Persian period. First, the author uses the term עֲדוּת (*‘ēdūt*, a loanword from Akkadian or Aramaic) for “treaty” rather than the more usual term בְּרִית (*bərīt*). (On עֲדוּת being a loanword meaning “treaty,” see note 4d of my translation of Deuteronomy.) Although both terms are used by authors

Notes to P8

throughout the four centuries spanning the composition history of the Torah and Former Prophets, the term עֲרִיֹה is favored by priestly authors writing in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, whereas the term בְּרִיֹה is favored by authors of the seventh and sixth centuries. A second indication that the *parashah* dates to the Persian period is its interest in the specific calendar days on which events occurred, which is a special concern of the priestly authors of this era. I assign this *parashah* to the second stage (associated with the cult at Mount Zion) rather than the third (associated with the cult at Mount Gerizim) because of the important role of Gilgal, which was venerated in the southern cult.

**8b with each step:** This phrase is not present in the Hebrew; I have added it in order to express in natural English the idea that is implicit in the Hebrew.

**8c The people came up out of the Yarden:** The author's phrasing here—עָלָה מִן ("come up from")—is somewhat strange; the reader instead expects to see עָבַר ("cross over, pass over") with the mark of the direct object (אֶת).

**8d just as your god Yahweh did to the Reed Sea:** Note the connection to the book of Exodus. Although it is the authors of the second stage who make explicit the connection to the parting of the Reed Sea (Exod P24 - P25), the connection is implicit in the early material in P6 and P7,1 (see note 6e above). It's worth repeating here that the book of Joshua is inextricably dependent on both Exodus and Numbers. It is inconceivable to me that Joshua could have been written prior to either Exodus or Numbers. The earliest version of Joshua either is contemporaneous with the early versions of those books (as I believe), or it was written after the early versions of those books (which is the traditional view as expressed in the Documentary Hypothesis).

**8e \*\*:** The Leningrad Codex has a *parashah setumah* here.

#### Notes to P9

**9a the Kena'anites' kings who lived beside the sea:** I understand this as a reference to the Mediterranean sea; it is also possible—although less likely, in my opinion—that the author intended the reader to understand the reference here as the Dead Sea.

**9b they no longer had any desire to challenge the Yisra'elites:** The author uses highly idiomatic language. More literally, "a spirit [to fight] against the Yisra'elites was no longer in them."

**9c \*\*:** The Leningrad Codex has a *parashah setumah* here.

#### Notes to P10

**10a Make some knives of flint...:** I understand this *parashah* and the following *parashah* (P11) to be a collaboration between the authors of the second and third compositional stages. Circumcision is a topic of special interest to the authors from Samaria, who understood it to be an obligation owed to Yahweh as part of the binding agreement (בְּרִיֹה) between Yahweh and Avraham, Yitzhaq, and Ya'aqov and their male descendants. In the material written by authors from the south, circumcision is the normal practice of Yahweh's people, but it is not actually part of the treaty obligations given in Deuteronomy and the original version of Exodus. (On the different views of בְּרִיֹה in northern and southern Yahwism, see the discussion in note 6,1c of my translation of Exodus.) By inserting P10 - P11 into the text, the authors

make circumcision the first act of the Yisra'elites upon entering the land. I speculate that the Samaritan authors may have wished to add this material here to ensure that the Yisra'elites fulfilled what they believed was one of the two main requirements for occupying the land—for males to be circumcised, in keeping with Yahweh's binding agreement with Abraham. It is somewhat unusual that the authors don't refer specifically to Abraham and the book of Genesis here—perhaps the authors from Mount Zion objected to including a reference in this passage. (In the book of Joshua, they allowed the Samaritans to add only one reference to their special book Genesis, which appears at the conclusion of Joshua in P54.)

It is worth noting the many connections that P10 and P11 have to Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These *parashot* are good examples of the accretive way in which the books of the Torah grew and evolved during the second half of the Persian period. Here in P10, the authors take an unusual place name known to them—Foreskin Hill, located near Gilgal—and build an elaborate etiology around it that invents a tradition about the absence of circumcision during the wilderness wanderings. To give their invented tradition the air of authority, they borrow language from Deuteronomy and weave in allusions to the Exodus narrative and to specific events in the version of Numbers as it existed in their day. The authors' approach in P11 is similar: they create an etiology for a place name (Gilgal) that supports their specific theme (the circumcision of the Yisra'elites after their wilderness wanderings), they create a chronology to mark the specialness of this event (the celebration of the first passover in their new home), and they enhance the authority of their narrative by explicitly showing it to be the conclusion of events in Exodus and Numbers (the eating of *man* in the wilderness).

**10b again a second time:** The phrasing in Hebrew is quite awkward. In my comments to my translations of Exodus and Numbers, I point out that the authors of those books' fourth compositional stage frequently write in a clumsy style. I understand those stages as a collaboration between the priesthoods in Samaria and Yehud; however, I believe the clumsy prose style is more characteristic of the authors from Yehud. I associate the Yehudean authors of the fourth stages of Exodus and Numbers with the authors of Joshua's second stage, so it is perhaps not surprising that we see signs of awkward prose in this *parashah*, which I view as a true collaboration between the Samaritans and the Yehudeans.

**10c all the men of fighting age:** In the material in Numbers by these same authors, it is the "men of fighting age" who are counted in the census. Note Yahweh's command to Mosheh in Num P1: "Make a census of them by their military divisions."

**10d no one born on the way... was ever circumcised:** More literally, "they didn't circumcise any of the people born on the way." On the use of an active verb with an indefinite subject in place of the passive, see note 7,1a above.

**10e Yahweh swore to them that he would never let them see the land:** An allusion to one of the outcomes of the story of the scouting of the land in Num P53-P55; because of the Yisra'elites' "grumbling and griping" about Yahweh, he swears that "none of you who were counted [in the census] shall enter the land that I swore on oath I would permanently settle you in."



**10f the land that Yahweh promised their ancestors he would give to us:** The language here is indicative of mid- to late Persian period authorship. At this time in the composition history of the Torah (which then was still connected to the book of Joshua), the books of the Torah had attained great authority within the cults in Yehud and Samaria. The priestly keepers of these texts likely recited these texts on a daily basis. Over time, these individuals had so internalized the texts that when they copied the texts or made editorial additions, they were often unable to maintain the proper authorial distance from the text. The clause here is a good example of this. If this *parashah* had been written by the original author of Joshua, we would expect to read “the land that he promised their ancestors he would give to them.” Instead, the author of this *parashah* has substituted “Yahweh” for “he” (likely because his familiarity with the phrase “the land that Yahweh promised,” which appears numerous times in the Torah, led him to write the phrase instinctively), and he has substituted “us” for “them” (likely for the same reason).

**10g a land overflowing with milk and honey:** The authors have borrowed this phrasing from Deuteronomy, where it appears numerous times. While the phrase represents an image of abundance, it’s worth pointing out that the authors and their audience would most likely have understood the milk as goat’s milk (not cow’s milk) and the honey as syrup from the date palm (not bee’s honey). Both goats and date palms do well in marginal land on which little can be productively cultivated.

#### Notes to P11

**11a I have rolled Egypt’s foulness off you:** The phrase “Egypt’s foulness (חרפה)” is a euphemism for the foreskin. See Gen P28,2, which refers to the foreskin as an “odious thing” (the Hebrew term is the same as that used here in Joshua—חרפה). The author’s choice of the verb “roll” (גלל or *gālāl*) is clearly to provide an etiology for the place name Gilgal. That said, however, the verb also serves as an allusion to the act of circumcision, which requires lifting and rolling back the foreskin to separate it cleanly from the penis when cutting it off. See note 10a above for a discussion of the composition and purpose of P11.

**11b The man stopped... The Yisra’elites never had man again:** Note the allusion to the narratives of Exodus and Numbers, both of which contain stories about the Yisra’elites eating *man* during the wilderness journeys. See Exod P28 and Num P48. (I understand Exod P28,1 to be very late—it would not have been part of the version of Exodus known to the authors of Josh P11.)

#### Notes to P11,1

**11,1a “No,” he replied:** That is, “No, I’m not with your enemies.” The Hebrew here is elliptical and somewhat awkward.

**11,1b threw himself flat on the ground:** The author uses the *qal* of the verb נפל (“fall down”); the *qal* of this verb is often used idiomatically with a reflexive meaning—“throw oneself down.” See note 53i in my translation of Samuel and note 37bq in my translation of Genesis.

**11,1c What is my lord saying to his servant?:** Yehoshua is perhaps confused by the man’s elliptical response to his question and asks for clarification of what he means.



**11,1d Remove your sandals from your feet:** The head of Yahweh's army gives an elliptical response that doesn't answer Yehoshua's question. The scene is clearly based on Mosheh's encounter with the burning bush in Exodus P4,1, where Yahweh tells Mosheh to remove his sandals because he is standing on holy ground. The author of this *parashah* in Joshua certainly expected the reader to recall the scene of Mosheh at the burning bush, and he wishes to show that Yehoshua is a worthy successor to Mosheh, being the recipient of a visit from a divine being (although not visited by Yahweh himself as was Mosheh). On the theme of Yehoshua as Mosheh's near equal, see note 1h above.

**11,1e the ground that you're standing on is holy ground:** It should be noted that Yehoshua is not standing; rather he is lying prostrate on the ground, and the image of him taking off his sandals while in a prone position is slightly ridiculous to the reader. The language is borrowed directly from Exodus P4,1, in which Mosheh is standing in front of the burning bush at Siynai. The use of the phrase here in Joshua in ways that don't quite fit the scene (he's lying down, not standing, and unlike Siynai, there is nothing especially holy about the site of Yeriyo) makes it clear that the author of this *parashah* is dependent on Exodus.

**11,1f And so Yehoshua did as he was told:** Note the unintentional humor in the action: Yehoshua remains lying flat on the ground and (very awkwardly) removes his sandals. The incongruity in the action is a result of the author's borrowing language from Exodus P4,1 but not adapting the scene here to fit the circumstances of the scene in Exodus.

**11,1g it was impossible for anyone to leave or enter:** The negative particle לֹא ("there isn't") is often used idiomatically to describe situations where it is most natural for a native English speaker to say a thing is "impossible." I have commented on this phenomenon frequently in my other translations. See, for example, note 53d in my translation of Exodus, notes 1v and 26g in my translation of Deuteronomy, and note 37w in my translation of Genesis.

**11,2a You should do this for six days...:** Note that Yahweh's instructions seem to imply that during the first six days of circling Yeriyo, there is no sound whatsoever, and that it is only on the seventh day that the priests blow their horns, following which the people give a great shout. There is some tension between these instructions and the description of the processions later in P11,2 and in P12, in which the priests and the people constantly blow their rams' horns on each circuit of the town. I don't believe there is any real problem in the text, however. Rather, I understand this tension as representative of the ancient authors' relatively loose attitude towards narrative logic. Ancient authors did not have the same strict views that we have today about logic and consistency within their narratives, and their composition style often prioritized emotional impact over narrative logic. In presenting Yahweh's instructions, the authors wished to maximize the contrast between the marches on the first six days and the seventh day; to do this, they portrayed the first six days' marches as silent. But in the actual narrative of the marches themselves, the authors wished to emphasize the tumult of the marches—as this has more emotional impact than silent marching—and so described the marches as a cacophony of horn-blowing

Notes to P11,2

by both priests and people.

**11,2b the people can charge straight into town:** The author uses idiomatic language. More literally, “the people will go up [into the town], each person [going] straight ahead.”

**11,2c Proceed with the treaty chest...with seven priests proceeding with seven rams’ horns:** The verb that I translate as “proceed with” is the *qal* of נשא (“carry, lift”). The verb is often used to describe carrying a thing from one place to another with no other verb of motion. In those instances, it is best to translate in a way that captures the motion involved, as I have done here. On this usage, see BDB, p. 671, def. 2a and 2e.

**11,2d in front of Yahweh:** That is, in front of Yahweh’s treaty chest. For the authors of the first stage of Numbers, Joshua, Judges and Samuel, the phrase “in front of Yahweh” always means “in front of the treaty chest” or “in front of Yahweh’s [battle] chest” (on the relationship between the treaty chest and the battle chest, see note 6c above). By contrast, for the Samaritan authors at Mount Gerizim who were active in the Persian period, the phrase “in front of Yahweh” always means “in front of the Meeting Tent.” On the southern origin of the treaty chest and the northern origin of the Meeting Tent, and their combination by the priesthoods of Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion during the Persian period, see the brief comments in my translation of Numbers on pages 175 and 186.

**11,2e Don’t shout and don’t say anything:** Yehoshua’s command refers only to speaking and shouting. The people can make noise by blowing their rams’ horns; however, they aren’t allowed to speak until given the command. Note that on the first march around the town in P11,2 and on the following marches in P12 the people in the rearguard constantly blow their rams’ horns.

## Notes to P12

**12a the town shall be made a ban devotion, and everything in it will be Yahweh’s:** That is, the residents of the town must be slaughtered and all its spoils, including livestock, shall become Yahweh’s property. As we see later in the *parashah*, all the livestock and the spoils are destroyed by burning (the underlying concept is that of a holocaust offering to the god). However, the metal items of value are not destroyed—they are instead consecrated for use in the cult. Note that the devotion of the personal possessions of banned persons is not a requirement of the ban devotion, although this was the normal practice. See my discussion of the ban devotion on pp. ix-xii above.

As I discussed in the introductory note, the authors of Joshua have structured the entire conquest narrative on the basis of the rule in Deut P19,4, which states that the inhabitants of all the towns in the land that Yahweh will give his people must be put to the ban devotion—all human beings in these towns must be killed. In addition, it is worth noting that Yehoshua’s command here in P12 to carry out the ban devotion makes explicit that the ban devotion in this instance also applies to any spoils (“banned good”) in the town, including all silver and gold and copper and iron items.

It is odd that the authors of Joshua did not incorporate the command to carry out the ban devotion against Yeriyo into one of Yahweh’s speeches to Yehoshua;

Yehoshua gives the command to carry out the ban devotion unprompted by Yahweh.

**12b the horns sounded:** Literally, “they blew on the horns.” The text is ambiguous, and can be understood in three ways: (1) the phrase refers to the seven priests blowing on their rams’ horns; (2) the phrase refers to the people in the rearguard blowing on their rams’ horns; or (3) the subject of the verb is indefinite and should be understood in the passive sense, with the author not specifying who blew on the horns. I translate according to this last option, although I believe the author intended the reader to understand it was the priests’ sounding of the horns that triggered the people’s cry, as this is consistent with the battle orders that Yahweh gives to Yehoshua at the beginning of P11,2.

**12c They made a ban devotion of everything in the town:** Note here the slaughter of both the banned inhabitants of Yeriyo and all the livestock in their possession.

**12d all her family members:** The Hebrew is ambiguous. Literally, “all that belongs to her,” which may refer to either her possessions or her family members. See note 12g below for understanding this as a reference to family members.

**12e all the other members of her family:** Literally, “all that belongs to her,” which may refer to either her possessions or her family members. See note 12g below for understanding this as a reference to family members.

**12f (except for the silver and gold... Yahweh’s temple):** I understand the text that I have translated within parentheses to be a late comment added to the text as part of the work in the fifth compositional stage. The anachronistic reference to Yahweh’s temple in this sentence is quite odd, although oddities such as this do sometimes appear in late additions to the text. The temple that the author had in mind is almost certainly the temple in Yerushalem, as the authors of the fifth stage were from Yehud. As I discuss elsewhere, the collaboration on the book of Joshua between the priesthoods in Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion ceased after the fourth stage.

**12g everyone related to her:** The Hebrew is ambiguous. Literally, “all that belongs to her,” which may refer to either her possessions or her family members. However, the fact that this phrase is the object of the verb “let live, spared” (the *hiph’il* of חיה) indicates clearly that “all that belongs to her” must refer to Rahav’s family and not her possessions.

**12h She and her family have lived in Yisra’el... to scout Yeriyo:** I have added the phrase “and her family,” which is implied in the Hebrew and which is required to produce sensible English. The term “Yisra’el” here should be understood as meaning “the community of Yisra’el.” The name “Yisra’el” is used by the authors of the first compositional stage of the Deuteronomistic History in multiple ways—as a name for a political entity (the northern kingdom), as a name for the community of people who are devotees of Yahweh, and as a geographical term. When used in the latter sense, “Yisra’el” indicated the mountain country that is immediately west of the Yarden river and that encompasses portions of the tribal areas of Ephrayim and Menashsheh. We see this usage in the book of Joshua, for example, in P23,1 and P23,2.

## Notes to P13

**13a cursed in front of Yahweh:** The phrase “in front of Yahweh” indicates that Joshua is referring to an action in the cult. It is unclear whether Yehoshua means “may this man’s offerings (or petitions) to Yahweh be cursed,” or “may petitioners (or priests) make a petition to Yahweh to curse this man.”

**13b When he lays its foundation...it will cost him his youngest:** The parallel structure of the Hebrew is indicative of language that is sung or chanted. It is very likely that the author here is quoting an old saying or a famous line from a song.

**13c —:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.

## Notes to P13,1

**13,1a Yahweh was with Yehoshua, and his fame reached every part of the land:** Note again the desire of the authors to demonstrate Yehoshua’s greatness, which he achieves with Yahweh’s help. There are numerous instances in Joshua where the authors go out of their way to portray Yehoshua in this fashion. See notes 1h and 5,1a above.

**13,1b —:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.

## Notes to P13,2

**13,2a our forces:** Translation of **העם**. The word **עם** is closest in meaning to “people,” but it is often used in military contexts with the connotation of a (loosely organized) fighting force. In this *parashah*, I have translated the word as “forces” or “armed forces” here and twice in the following paragraph.

**13,2b in front of the gate:** It is likely that the letter *mem* has fallen off the beginning of the preposition **לפני** (“in front of”). With the addition of the *mem*, the preposition would mean “from in front of,” which fits the context better. It is also worth noting that the preceding word **וירדפום** (“they pursued them”) ends with a *mem*, so it easy to see how the *mem* might have fallen off the preposition through a scribal error.

**13,2c threw himself flat on the ground:** On this idiomatic use of the *qal* of the verb **נפל** (“fall down”), see note 11,1b above.

**13,2d why did you make this people cross the Yarden... Oh, how I wish we had chosen to remain...:** The doubts that Yehoshua expresses to Yahweh after the disastrous foray at Ay employ language and imagery similar to that seen in the Yisra’elites’ complaints at various points of suffering during the wilderness journeys. It is interesting to note that this is the sole place in Joshua where Yehoshua is presented in an unflattering light.

For similar examples of complaint language and imagery, see Exodus **P27,2** (when the people complain about the lack of any food), Exodus **P29** (when the people complain about the lack of water), Num **P48** (when the people complain about the lack of “decent food”), and Num **P53** (when the people express doubts about their ability to defeat the Anaqis and say they wish they had stayed in Egypt).

**13,2e Should the Kena’anites or any others living in the land hear of this, they’ll turn against us:** Recall that in P9, the Amorites’ kings and the Kena’anites’ kings lost their courage and “they no longer had any desire to challenge the Yisra’elites” after they heard the report about Yahweh stopping the flow of the Yarden. Here in P13,2,

Yehoshua is complaining to Yahweh that the Kena'anites and others living in the land might regain their courage and destroy the Yisra'elites.

**13,2f wipe out all memory of us from this land:** Literally, “wipe out our name from this land.” For the use of **שם** (“name”) with the meaning of memory, see BDB, p. 1028, def. 2c.

**13,2g and then what will you do for your great name?:** In the thought of the Deuteronomists, the name “Yahweh” has special power and a whole theology grew up around the name and its special power. While the author of this *parashah* was aware of this theology, I think his use of the term “name” here is in reference to Yahweh’s reputation. In posing his question, Yehoshua is suggesting to Yahweh that if he allows the Kena'anites to destroy the Yisra'elites, he will lose his reputation as a great and powerful god. Because “name” is such a loaded term when used in connection to Yahweh, I have chosen to translate Yehoshua’s question word for word. A truly functionally equivalent translation of his question would be “and then what will you do to preserve your great reputation?”

In the Leningrad Codex, there is a *parashah setumah* following the phrase “your great name.”

**13,2h Get off the ground!:** Literally, “Get yourself up!” The tone of the Hebrew here is quite disrespectful, which I have tried to capture in my translation.

**13,2i Why in the world are you lying there flat on your face?:** More literally, “Why in the world are you throwing yourself flat on your face?” The author uses the verb **נפל** (“fall”) in its colloquial sense of “throw oneself down.” See note 11,1b above. Again, Yahweh’s tone here is quite disrespectful.

**13,2j they’ve violated my treaty:** The reference is to the treaty in the plains of Mo'av, recorded in the book of Deuteronomy. It is not the treaty at Siynai. The author specifically has in mind the passage about the ban devotion in Deut **P19,4**: “However, with respect to the towns of those peoples whose lands your god Yahweh is going to give you as your own property, you mustn’t spare any living soul. For you must be sure to make a ban devotion of them—the Hethites, the Amorites, the Kena'anites, the Perizzites, the Hiwwites, and the Yevusites—just as your god Yahweh has ordered you.” While the law in Deut P19,4 doesn’t require the spoils to be given over to Yahweh, Yehoshua adds this as a condition of the ban devotion when giving his orders to the people prior to attacking Yeriyo in P12.

**13,2k they’ll turn tail from them:** The language is reminiscent of the treaty curses in Deuteronomy **P26** which Yahweh imposes on those who break the treaty: “you’ll march out against him [i.e. your enemies] as a single force, but then flee from him in seven different directions.”

**13,2l the banned one:** Note the inconsistency in the text. In the previous sentences, Yahweh states that there are multiple people who are guilty (“they took...they stole...”), but now there is only a single guilty person. Such inconsistencies are common in ancient Hebrew prose. Ancient Hebrew didn’t demand consistency of person and number the way that English does, and as a result it is often difficult to

tell if any specific inconsistency is original to the text or is an indication of a later addition. Here I believe the inconsistency is original.

**13,2m Consecrate yourselves tomorrow:** During the ceremony in which the lot is used to determine the identify of the banned one, the people must be ritually pure, for the ceremony is conducted in Yahweh's presence—it is Yahweh who designates the guilty party through the lot. See P5 for another instance of the people needing to consecrate themselves to prepare for being in Yahweh's presence, and see the discussion in note 5a.

**13,2n thus says Yisra'el's god Yahweh: 'A banned person is present... the banned one from your community':** Note that there is an oracle within the speech that Yahweh commands Yehoshua to relay to the Yisra'elites; the oracle is relatively short, ending at "the banned one from your community," and the speech that Yahweh wishes Yehoshua to deliver to the Yisra'elites continues after the oracle until the end of the paragraph.

**13,2o in Yisra'el:** That is, in the community of Yisra'el. On this use of the term, see note 12h above.

**13,2p he had Yehudah's clan present itself:** The Masoretic vocalization of the text is in error. The word for clan (משפח) should have been vocalized as the plural construct (משפחות) rather than the singular construct (משפחה). If it had been vocalized correctly, the text would read "he had Yehudah's clans present themselves."

**13,2q he had the Zarhites' clan present itself by just its men:** Note the inconsistency in the text: in Yahweh's speech to Yehoshua earlier in the *parashah*, he states that the clan captured by the lot should present itself by its families (not its men). It is likely the text is in error here, and "by its men" (לגברים, which appears in the following sentence) was a copyist's mistake for "by its families" (לבתים).

**13,2r two hundred sheqels of silver, and a single gold ingot weighing fifty sheqels:** A sheqel was approximately 11 grams. Thus the amount of silver Akan took was equivalent to 2.2 kilograms or roughly 5 pounds, and the weight of the gold ingot was 550 grams or roughly twenty ounces. For a good overview of the weight system used by the authors of the Tanakh, see the article "[Weights & Measures](#)" at the Jewish Virtual Library website.

**13,2s they discovered it hidden in his tent:** The pronoun "it" here refers to the especially fine Babylonian coat.

**13,2t in front of Yahweh:** That is, in front of the treaty chest.

**13,2u marched them up:** The verb עלה is often used to describe travel to a position or place that is higher in elevation, which is how the verb is used here. Yeriho sits at more than five hundred feet below sea level, and any journey to the west would involve a considerable gain in elevation.

**13,2v stoned him... immolated them... pelted them:** The shift from the singular to the plural pronoun is a little awkward in Hebrew, but not that unusual—pronoun usage in ancient Hebrew was considerably more flexible than pronoun usage in modern-day English. The author uses the singular pronoun to highlight that it was Akan who was the guilty party, but then shifts to the plural pronoun in reference to Akan's family and livestock, all of whom are immolated and stoned.

**14a Don't fear and don't be discouraged:** This command to Yehoshua functions as a sort of refrain throughout the conquest narrative. It also appears in Yahweh's speech to Yehoshua in P1 that sets the stage for the book and in Mosheh's speech to Yehoshua in Deut P29,1 in which he tells Yehoshua that he is the one who will give the Yisra'elites possession of their land. From a literary perspective, the author has placed this command here to remind Yehoshua (and to remind the reader) of Yahweh's speech to Yehoshua that opens the book. The presence of this command to Yehoshua in the early layers of both Deuteronomy and Joshua shows the close connection of these two books. See also the related comments in note 1h above.

## Notes to P14

**14b Do to Ay and its king just as you did to Yeriyo and its king:** That is, slaughter them as a ban devotion.

**14c Except this time, you may take its plunder and livestock:** The rules of the ban devotion in Deut P19,4 mention only the slaughter of the towns' inhabitants and say nothing about taking spoils from the town. But we also know from Deut P13,2 that the ban devotion typically included destruction of the personal possessions of the banned individuals. In the attack on Yeriyo, Yehoshua made explicit that any spoils—that is, the personal possessions of Yeriyo's inhabitants—were subject to the ban devotion. But in the attack on Ay, Yahweh explicitly allows the taking of plunder, which is fully consistent with Deut P19,4. (On the specific language used in Deut P19,4, see the discussion in note 4g above.)

**14d made ready to go up to Ay:** The author uses an unusual construction, the verb קום ("stand, arise") followed by the infinitive construct of עלה ("to go up")—literally, "they arose to go up to Ay." This construction of קום followed by an infinitive of a verb of motion is relatively rare, but it appears to be idiomatic. Based on context, I believe the idiom must mean something like, "prepare to go, get ready to go."

A similar use of this construction can be seen in Jonah 1.3: "But Yonah made ready to run away [וַיֵּקֶם יוֹנָה לִבְרוּחַ] from Yahweh to Tarshiysh: he went down to Yapho and found a boat going to Tarshish. . . ." See also the use of this idiomatic construction in Jud 19.5, 7, 9; 1 Kings 21.16; 2 Kings 7.5; and Ruth 2.15.

**14e all the forces with me:** The word עַם ("people") is often used in the books comprising the Deuteronomistic History to connote a (loosely organized) military force. I have translated here accordingly. See note 13,2a above.

**14f these are your orders:** I have expressed the idea of the Hebrew within this specific context in the most natural way in English. A literal translation of the Hebrew is simply, "I have ordered you."

**14g all [the military] the forces:** A later editor, likely from Joshua's final compositional stage, has glossed העם ("the people") with the word המלחמה ("the battle") to indicate that "people" here has the connotation of a military force. The gloss makes the Hebrew read very awkwardly, however, as the author has neglected to remove the definite article from העם even though the word is clearly in construct with המלחמה. It's worth noting that the glosses in P6 show the same treatment of the definite article; see notes 6c, 6f, and 6h above.

**14h (Now he had taken...to the west of the town.):** The narrative flow is somewhat confused here. I believe the best way to understand this sentence is as a parenthetical comment original to the text, which the author uses to remind the reader that Yehoshua had already set up an ambush force west of the town. The author of this *parashah* and of the following *parashah* (P15) has an unusual narrative style that makes frequent use of parenthetical comments to remind the reader—unnecessarily, in my opinion—of actions that took place earlier in the story. Note the numerous other parenthetical comments in this *parashah*, all of which I understand as original to the text.

**14i he had take approximately five thousand men and set them up as an ambush force:** Near the beginning of the *parashah*, the author states that the size of the ambush force is thirty thousand men. The reason for the discrepancy is unclear to me. The text does not appear to be corrupt and I see little evidence of multiple layers of authorship in the *parashah* apart from the gloss discussed above in note 14g. It is possible that the author simply overlooked the discrepancy, as the frequent parenthetical comments that characterize his style make for a text that can be quite confusing to read.

**14j So the military forces had established...(to the west of the town):** This sentence provides another good example of the unusual prose style of the author of this *parashah*, as discussed in note 14h above. Note both the repetition of information already given (he stated the main camp and the ambush were set up in the preceding paragraph) and the inclusion of unnecessary information (which I have translated in parentheses).

**14k let themselves be attacked by them:** The verb is conjugated as the *niph'al* here, and is an example of the so-called *niph'al tolerativum*, which is used to express actions that the subject allows to happen to him- or herself. See GKC §51 c. There is absolutely no need to emend the text here, as BDB, p. 619 proposes. The preposition לפני ("in front of") expresses agency ("by") in certain situations, and that is how I understand the use of the preposition here. See notes 55b and 68b of my translation of Numbers for a discussion of this use of the preposition.

**14l fled down Wilderness Road:** I understand דרך המדבר to be the name of the road leading east to the desert wilderness beyond the Yarden river. Note that Yehoshua and his forces flee to the east, drawing Ay's forces out of town in the same direction, and so leaving the way open for the men lying in ambush to the west of the town.

**14m organized themselves:** More literally, "called themselves together."



**15a Hold out the spear that's in your hand toward Ay:** The action here recalls the battle between the Yisra'elites and the Amaleqites in the desert, when Mosheh held his staff out over the battlefield to influence the outcome of the battle. See Exodus P30. The author of this *parashah* certainly had the Exodus *parashah* in mind, and he would have expected his audience to make the connection. His purpose in connecting Yehoshua with imagery associated with Mosheh is to portray Yehoshua as Mosheh's equal or near-equal, which is one of the key themes of the book of Joshua.

It is possible to view the material about the spear to be a later addition to Joshua. However, if we see it as integral to the *parashah* (as I do), then this has implications for how we understand the composition of Joshua relative to Exodus. The allusion to Exodus is completely understandable if the earliest versions of the books of Joshua and Exodus-Numbers were composed at the same time as part of the Deuteronomistic History, as I propose. And the allusion to Exodus is also understandable if Joshua was composed after Exodus (as is argued in the traditional Documentary Hypothesis, which views the Deuteronomistic History as composed after the "Yahwist's" and the "Elohists'" contributions to the books of the Torah). However, the allusion is inexplicable if the books traditionally ascribed to the Deuteronomistic History (Deuteronomy plus Joshua -Kings) were composed prior to Exodus and the other books of the Torah, which is a view held by many scholars today. We see the same issue in the story of the head of Yahweh's army appearing to Yehoshua in P11,1, which I believe is also from the first compositional layer of Joshua, and which borrows language from Exodus P4,1.

**15b the forces that were fleeing to the wilderness:** The reader may be confused by this reference, as the author hasn't expressed himself very clearly. The "forces that were fleeing to the wilderness" are Yehoshua and the main body of his forces. Recall that at the end of P14, Yehoshua and "all Yisra'el" let themselves be attacked and then fled down the Wilderness Road in order to draw the men of Ay away from their town.

**15c and slaughtered everyone there:** The author uses idiomatic language commonly used to describe a wholesale slaughter. Literally, "and struck it [i.e. the town] according to the edge of the sword." That is, the Yisra'elites slaughtered all the women, children, and men not of fighting age who had remained back in town. The text is somewhat confusing because the author uses the phrase "all the inhabitants of Ay" in the previous sentence to refer to the men of fighting age who left town to pursue the Yisra'elites.

**15d Yehoshua didn't pull back...until all of Ay's inhabitants had been slaughtered:** Note the incongruity of the imagery. At the beginning of the *parashah*, Yahweh commands Yehoshua to hold out his arm toward Ay, and here we see that he kept his arm extended from the beginning of the battle until every last inhabitant of Ay had been killed. Yet in the intervening action, he is also somehow leading the Yisra'elite counterattack while holding out his arm the entire time. The absurdity of the imagery is a consequence of the author's dependence on the story of Mosheh holding out his "divine stick" against the Amaleqites in Exod P30, and his desire to show Yehoshua prove himself a worthy successor of Mosheh by carrying out actions

similar to Mosheh's. We see similarly absurd imagery in P11,1, which draws on Exod P4,1; see notes 11,1e and 11,1f above.

**15e had been slaughtered as a ban devotion:** The verb here—הִחַרִּים—is conjugated in the active voice and with a third-person singular subject. I understand the subject to be indefinite and so translate in the passive voice. See note 7,1a above on the use of active verbs with indefinite subjects to express the passive.

**15f he hung the king of Ay's corpse on a tree until evening:** The author here portrays Yehoshua as acting in accord with Mosheh's Torah (as Yahweh commanded him to do in P1). At sunset Yehoshua orders the corpse to be taken down from the tree, in keeping with the law in Deut P20,4; this law states that if a man is put to death and hung from a tree, his corpse cannot remain on the tree overnight but must be buried the same day. See the end of P19,2 for another example of Yehoshua observing this law.

#### Notes to P16

**16a At that time, Yehoshua built an altar to Yisra'el's god Yahweh on Mount Eyval...** As I discuss in more detail in the essay on the composition history of Joshua, I understand the first two-thirds of this *parashah* to be an addition made by Samaritan priests associated with Mount Gerizim, as part of the work on the book's third compositional stage. This addition, in my opinion, signifies the Samaritans' formal acceptance of the book of Deuteronomy (which was a southern composition)—it describes the creation of a second copy of the book that is associated with the cult at Mount Gerizim. The material in this *parashah* must have been the subject of intensive negotiations between the Samaritans and Yehudeans given the two cults' differing views on "the place that Yahweh chose." It is likely, in my opinion, that this *parashah* was composed at a relatively early stage in the partnership between the Samaritans and the Yehudeans—perhaps at the end of the sixth century or the beginning of the fifth century BCE. See also my comments on the Samaritan material in P16 on pp. 157f below.

The first two-thirds of this *parashah* (Josh P16) is presented as the fulfillment of Mosheh's commands to the Yisra'elites in Deut P24 - P24,2, and the author of the *parashah* uses language identical to that appearing in Deuteronomy. (I now view these *parashot* in Deuteronomy to be a Persian period addition made by the same authors responsible for Josh P16; at the time I translated Deuteronomy I still viewed the books of the Torah as being wholly a product of authors from Yehudah/Yehud.) The authors of Joshua's second and third stages—like the authors of the first stage—intended their readers to understand the book to be the fulfillment of Yahweh's promises made to the Yisra'elites as part of his treaty with them. (Indeed, the authors of the first stage make this explicit in Yehoshua's farewell speech in P53). Josh P16 plays an important role in the structure of their book as it existed in the second and third stages—the *parashah* represents the establishment of Yahweh's Torah in the land, and it reminds the Yisra'elites that they are subject to the treaty's terms; if they adhere to its terms, they will be rewarded with the treaty blessings, and if they don't adhere to its terms, they will suffer the treaty curses.

Many scholars, including myself, believe that in the earliest versions of Deuteronomy and Joshua, the text in Deut P24 and Josh P16 read Mount Gerizim

instead of Mount Eyval. However, in the Hasmonean period, after the priesthoods in Yehud and Samaria had come into conflict with each other and had ceased their joint work on the books of the Torah, the priests in Yehud changed the text to read Mount Eyval as a sign of disrespect for the Samaritan cult to Yahweh at Mount Gerizim.

On a completely separate topic, it is worth noting that the distance from Ay (which is the setting of the previous *parashah*) to Mount Eyval and Mount Gerizim (both of which about Shekem) is approximately twenty miles.

**16b just as Mosheh Yahwehsservant had commanded the Yisra’elites to do:** A reference to Mosheh’s speech in Deut P24, in which he tells the Yisra’elites that after they cross the Yarden, they must write the words of the book of Deuteronomy on stones that have been white-washed with lime, stand the stones up on Mount Eyval (Mount Gerizim in the Persian period versions of the book), and then build an altar of flawless stones there and make whole offerings to Yahweh.

**16c the scroll of Mosheh’s Torah:** A reference to the rules and teaching in the book of Deuteronomy in the version of Deuteronomy as it existed in the early fifth century BCE, in the “edition” of it associated with the beginning of the partnership between the Samaritans and the Yehudeans.

**16d welfare offerings:** It’s worth noting that welfare offerings are associated with occasions of celebration. The meat from welfare offerings presented to Yahweh by an individual would be shared with large numbers of family and friends in a feast celebrated within the shrine precincts. Welfare offerings are also part of large community celebrations, in which the meat from the offerings is shared with everyone in the community. We should understand the reference to welfare offerings here to indicate that the authors viewed the events in P16 to be an occasion of great celebration and feasting. A good example of welfare offerings enjoyed by the community can be seen in Num P29,5-P41, which describes a twelve-day feast celebrating the dedication of Yahweh’s altar.

**16e which Mosheh himself had written down in front of the Yisra’elites:** This is most likely a reference to Deut P30, the core of which I believe belongs to Deuteronomy’s second stage, which I associate with the initial composition of the Deuteronomistic History. The relevant passage in Deut P30 reads, “once Mosheh had completely finished writing down the stipulations of this Torah on a scroll...” The latter half of Deut P29,1 also makes a reference to Mosheh writing down a copy of “this teaching” (i.e. the book of Deuteronomy); however, I date that second half of that *parashah* to the Persian period.

**16f in keeping with Mosheh Yahwehsservant’s command that he had previously given to bless the people Yisra’el:** A reference to Mosheh’s command in Deut P24,2.

**16g Yehoshua read out everything in the Torah—both the blessing and the curse:** Yehoshua reads out the entire terms of Yahweh’s treaty with the Yisra’elites, which concludes with a set of blessings that Yahweh will bestow on the Yisra’elites if they adhere to the treaty’s terms and a set of curses that Yahweh will inflict on them if they don’t adhere to the treaty’s terms. “Everything in the Torah” is a reference to the rules and precepts in Deuteronomy as it then existed (these are found in Deut

P12,5 - P21,35); the blessing is a reference to Deut P25 and the curse is a reference to Deut P26.

**16h the scroll of the Torah:** That is, the book of Deuteronomy.

**16i the foreigners travelling with them:** This is the “large contingent” (ערב רב) of non-Yisra’elites who left Egypt with the Yisra’elites and accompanied them on their desert journeys to Kena’an. See Exodus P19 for the first reference to them.

**16j When all the kings...:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is a *parashah petuhah* immediately preceding this sentence. In this instance, the Leningrad Codex seems clearly superior to the Aleppo Codex.

## Notes to P17

**17a When the citizens of Giv’on heard... they also acted craftily:** The author uses “also” to compare the craftiness of the Giv’onites with the craftiness of the Yisra’elites in taking Ay.

It is difficult to form a clear view of the composition history of this *parashah*. On the one hand, the *parashah* is essential to the plot of the conquest narrative. The treaty between the Yisra’elites and the Giv’onites is the reason the Amorite kings form an alliance and attack Giv’on—it is this attack that sets in motion the entire conquest of the southern parts of Kena’an in P19 - P21,1. So we can be certain that the core of the *parashah* must belong to the first compositional stage of the book. On the other hand, however, there are strong indications that much material in the *parashah* must have been written in the Persian period. Specifically, the word עדה (“community”) is used six times in the *parashah* in ways that are only seen in material written by authors associated with the Persian period cults at Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion. In addition, the phrase “at the place he chooses” appears at the end of the *parashah*; this phrase is closely associated with the partnership between the priests at Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion (which began during the Persian period), so its use confirms the presence of some Persian period material here.

While it is clear that there are two main strands of authorship in this *parashah*, it is not obvious how to untangle them; the problem is exacerbated by the fact that the text is obviously corrupt in multiple places and must have suffered significantly during the transmission process. I make an attempt in the following notes to identify which material is from the Persian period, but I am not confident that I have found a satisfactory solution.

**17b provisioned:** The Hebrew word is misspelled and I have reflected this error in my translation. In copying the word for “provisioned,” a scribe has written a *resh* (ר) in place of a *daleth* (ד)—two letters that look alike and that are easily confused for each other. The word is spelled correctly later in the *parashah*.

**17c dried out and spotted with mold:** Literally, “were dry, having become spotted.” The root נקר means “spotted” and should be translated that way here. There is no reason to follow BDB, p. 666, which proposes that the word here means “crumbly.”

**17d the camp at Gilgal:** Note that the setting has moved back to Gilgal from Mount Eyval in the previous *parashah*. The geographical discontinuity is a clear indication of a shift in authorship from the previous *parashah*. As discussed in the notes to P16,

that *parashah* dates to the third compositional stage; the core of P17, by contrast, is part of Joshua's first compositional stage.

**17e “We have come from a far off country”:** Readers from ancient Yehud and Samaria would have immediately understood that the Giv'onites are lying, for Giv'on is approximately only fifteen miles (or twenty-five kilometers) west of Gilgal.

Note how the Giv'onites' ruse implies that they themselves are somehow familiar with Deut P19,4, which is part of the laws of war and which includes the requirement regarding the ban devotion. The ban devotion applies specifically to towns in the lands that Yahweh is going to give his people (this would include Giv'on, which is the very middle of Kena'an), whereas the laws of war allow the Yisra'elites to make peace with towns that are “very far” from them. This is why the Giv'onites pretend to be from a far off country when they seek to make a treaty with the Yisra'elites.

**17f you might be living right here among us:** Note the author's use of irony. The author has let the reader know the delegation is from Giv'on and does in fact live “right there” among the Yisra'elites; thus the reader understands that the Yisra'elites here are unknowingly speaking the truth.

**17g the Hiwwites:** This refers to the men of Giv'on, who are part of the Hiwwite people. Recall that, for the authors of Joshua, there are seven native peoples in Kena'an: Amorites, Girgashites, Hiwwites, Hethites, Kena'anites, Perizzites, and Yevusites.

**17h “We're your servants,” they said to Yehoshua:** This response is a complete *non sequitur*. It is likely that one or more sentences has fallen out of the text preceding this sentence. As mentioned in note 17a above, the text of this *parashah* has a number of problems—there are misspelled words (see note 17b above) and other examples of phrases and sentences that appear to have fallen from the text (see notes 17o and 17r below).

**17i everything that he did to Egypt and everything he did to two of the Amorites' kings:** Note that the narrative in this *parashah*, which belongs to the first compositional stage, is dependent on Exodus-Numbers: it is because the Giv'onites heard about events in Exodus-Numbers that they have decided to seek peace with the Yisra'elites. The fact that the narrative of the first compositional stage of Joshua presupposes the narrative in Exodus-Numbers is best explained, in my opinion, if we view Joshua, Exodus, and Numbers as being initially composed as part of the same project (the Deuteronomistic History). See also my comments in note 15a above.

**17j Tell them we're their servants and that we want them to make a treaty with us:** In Hebrew, this is written in direct discourse. English has a preference for indirect discourse in many places where Hebrew writers use direct discourse and I have accordingly translated in indirect discourse. Literally, “You should say to them: ‘We are your servants. So now, make a treaty with us!’” It is also possible to translate using indirect discourse as “Tell them you're their servants and that you want them to make a treaty with you.” In fact, this way of translating reflects the literal meaning of the Hebrew. However, I believe the way that I have translated the speech, which

captures the idea that these men wish to make a treaty on behalf of all Giv'onites, is the most natural way to express the author's intent in English.

**17k The men took some of their provisions:** That is, the Yisra'elites took some of the Giv'onites' provisions in order to inspect them, to assess whether the Giv'onites' were telling the truth about coming from "a country very far away."

**17l and the community's leaders swore an oath to them to that effect:** I understand this phrase to be an addition by the authors of the second and third stages. The addition is necessary to set up the lengthy addition in the second half of the *parashah* made by these same authors. The presence of the word עדה ("community") here and five times in the second half of the *parashah* is a clear indication of a Persian period date for this material. This word is closely associated with the priestly authors from Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion who were active in the Persian period, and it appears scores of times in material that these authors composed in Exodus and Numbers.

**17m two days later:** The Hebrew reads "at the end of three days." In referencing future events, ancient Hebrew speakers counted today as the first day, so that "at the end of three days" is equivalent to the English expression "two days later."

**17n were living right there among them:** This phrasing repeats the language used at the beginning of the *parashah*; the author uses the language here to complete the ironic literary effect that he introduced earlier. See note 17f above.

All the material in this *parashah* up to here clearly belongs to the first compositional stage, with the exception of the one small addition discussed above in note 17l. After this point in the text, things become less clear, in part because the text after this point shows signs of corruption (see the following note). I believe the material from the first stage breaks off here and resumes several sentences later with the passage beginning "Yehoshua then summoned them," as that sentence follows naturally from the statement that the Yisra'elites learned the Giv'onites were neighbors. I assign the intervening material about the community leaders' oath and the decision to make the Giv'onites gatherers of wood and drawers of water to the authors of the second and third stages. This material contains four uses of the word עדה ("community"), language that is strongly associated with the authors of the second and third stages and which is not used by the authors of the first stage of Joshua.

**17o The Yisra'elites then departed:** There is clearly an error in the text—the Yisra'elites are in their camp in Gilgal and do not leave it. It is the Giv'onites who leave the Yisra'elites and return to their towns. It is unclear to me whether a scribe inadvertently wrote "the Yisra'elites" (בני ישראל) in place of "the Giv'onites" (אנשי גבען or בני גבען) or whether a phrase such as "from the camp of" (ממחנה) has fallen from the text. In the latter case, the text would have originally read, "They then departed the Yisra'elites' camp."

**17p complained to each other about their leaders:** The author uses the *niph'al* form of the verb. The *niph'al* often indicates reflexive action, and that is the best way to understand its use here. If we read the verb this way, the preposition על should be understood as "about" rather than "against" (which is the traditional translation).

**17q we're not permitted to harm them:** On this use of the verb יכל ("be able") with a negative, see BDB, p. 407, def. 1d.

**17r their leaders said to them:** I believe a full sentence has fallen from the text here; the sentence would have contained the leaders' proposal that the Giv'onites serve as gatherers of wood and drawers of water for the community.

**17s Yehoshua then summoned them:** I understand all the material from here to the end of the *parashah*, with the exception of the last sentence, to belong to the first compositional stage. See note 17n above.

**17t So damn you for lying!:** The Hebrew reads literally, "So then, may you be cursed!" Translating into the functionally equivalent phrase in English requires the addition of the phrase "for lying" in order that the speech flow naturally to the following sentence.

**17u for my god's nation:** It is also possible to understand this phrase to mean "for my god's shrine [or temple]." However, if we assume this passage belongs to the first compositional stage, then I believe it is better in this instance to read the phrase as "my god's nation," as the authors of the first compositional stage were careful to avoid anachronisms such as this.

It is interesting to note that the authors of the last sentence of the *parashah*, which I believe is an addition from the second and third stages, seem to have understood בית אלהי as "my god's shrine." See notes 17w and 17x below.

**17v what your god Yahweh commanded his servant Mosheh—that he would give you this entire country...:** This is almost certainly a reference to Deut P6,4, in which Mosheh tells the Yisra'elites that Yahweh will bring them into the land and "clear out many peoples" from their path. It is worth noting that Deut P6,4 also mentions the requirement of putting the native peoples to the ban devotion.

**17w At that time Yehoshua...:** I believe the final sentence of the *parashah* was added by the authors of the second and third compositional stages. The addition appears to have been made at a later time than the addition discussed above in note 17m and likely was prompted by the authors' choosing to interpret the phrase בית אלהי ("my god's nation"), which appeared earlier in the *parashah* and is from the first compositional stage, as "my god's shrine [or temple]." See note 17u above.

**17x and also for Yahweh's altar (as they are today) at the place that he chooses:** This passage is especially noteworthy for the reference to Yahweh's altar which is located at "the place that he chooses." This phrase (or "the place that he chose" in the Samaritan Torah) appears more than twenty times in Deuteronomy in reference to where Yahweh chooses to place his name—that is, the location of the shrine that contains his presence and the altar on which offerings are presented to him. As many scholars have pointed out, the phrase represents a compromise that must have been the product of intensive negotiations between the priesthoods in Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion. Its ambiguity allowed priests in each location to interpret the passages in which it appeared as referring to the altar at their own cult location. It is especially

interesting that the phrase appears here in Joshua, as this is the only occurrence of the phrase outside of Deuteronomy.

It is also worth noting here that the mention of Yahweh's altar in P17 follows closely on the construction of the altar in P16 on Mount Eyval (originally Mount Gerizim). It is surprising to me that the priests at Mount Zion would have agreed to a mention of the altar here at the end of P17 so soon after the construction of the altar at the place that the Samaritans believed Yahweh chose. In this instance, as in P16, the Samaritans seem to have come out on top in the negotiated text.

#### Notes to P18

**18a and slaughtered everyone there as a ban devotion:** More literally, "and made a ban devotion of it." I have added language to make explicit how an ancient reader would have understood the reference to the ban devotion.

**18b they were terrified:** There is no proper antecedent to the pronoun "they." In writing the lengthy opening sentence to this parashah, the author seems to have lost sight of the subject of the first clause, which is Yerushalem's king Adoniy-Tzedeq. The author likely had in his mind that Adoniy-Tzedeq and Yerushalem's inhabitants heard the report, and thus wrote "they were terrified" here rather than "he was terrified." The ancient reader would understand that the proximity of Giv'on to Yerushalem (the two towns are approximately five miles apart) heightened the threat that Adoniy-Tzedeq felt because of the treaty between the Yisra'elites and the Giv'onites. Thus there is some logic to his decision to make a preemptive attack on Giv'on. For Giv'on's location relative to Yerushalem, see the map on page 172 below.

**18c Hevron...Yarmuth...Lakiysh...Eglon:** These four towns are located within thirty miles of Yerushalem to the south and the west, in the territory that later in the book of Joshua is allotted in the tribe of Yehudah.

**18d let's attack Giv'on:** Adoniy-Tzedeq plans a preemptive attack on Giv'on in order to neutralize the threat of the Giv'onites' treaty with Yisra'el.

**18e Don't withhold your aid from your servants!:** The language of the Giv'onites' message to Yehoshua suggests that, in the author's mind, the terms of the treaty between the Giv'onites and the Yisra'elites included a commitment to mutual defense.

**18f all the kings of the Amorites in the hill country:** Of the five towns that have joined forces, Lakiysh and Eglon are located just west of the hill country, in the low country within fifteen miles of the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

#### Notes to P19

**19a Don't be afraid:** On the use of this phrase as a sort of refrain in the book of Joshua and its role of reinforcing the theme of trusting in Yahweh to uphold the promises he made in his treaty with respect to making the Yisra'elites victorious over their foes, see note 1h above.

**19b Yahweh threw huge stones down upon them:** This is the only instance in Joshua in which it is Yahweh rather than the Yisra'elites who kills Kena'an's native inhabitants. Strictly speaking, the victims of the hailstones would not be part of the ban devotion, as they were not killed by the Yisra'elites. The author may have decided to invent this scene, even though it is inconsistent with the conquest narrative's



organizing principle of the ban devotion, in order to provide a setting for the quote from the Scroll of Most Esteemed in the following *parashah* (P19,1). Note also the conclusion of P19,1, where it is natural for the reader to connect the statement that “Yahweh was fighting for Yisra’el” with his killing the armies of the five kings with stones from the sky in P19.

**19,1a “As Yisra’el looks on. . . :** The author has inserted an excerpt of a famous old song here. The passage is somewhat confusing to the reader, because the author places the words of the song in Yehoshua’s mouth, and the verb forms of the song don’t fully make sense as speech from Yehoshua to Yahweh. I have punctuated the song in a way that I believe fits how the author wanted the song to be understood; thus, I only show the first couplet as direct speech of Yehoshua, and I treat the second couplet as narration.

**Notes to P19,1**

The form of the verb in the first line, דָּוַם (“stop, be still, be silent”), may be understood as either an imperative or the infinitive absolute. The principal author of the first stage of Yehoshua, who was likely responsible for P19,1, treats the verb as an imperative; this is clear from the last sentence of the *parashah*, where the author states that Yahweh “obeyed a man” (that is, Yehoshua’s speech is a demand or wish that the sun be stilled, and not a statement that it was stilled). Strictly speaking, the imperative is nonsensical in the context that the author has set up, for the imperative implies Yehoshua is addressing the sun and not Yahweh. However, the author likely was unwilling to change the verb form to fit the situation in which he used the song excerpt; as a result, his only recourse was to understand the verb form as the imperative rather than the infinitive absolute, and then to twist the usage of the imperative to make it fit the context.

In its original context, however, this song excerpt did not represent direct speech, but rather was likely a simple narration of past events. That is, the original audience of this song would most likely have understood the verb form as the infinitive absolute. Note the subtle differences in how I translate the verb forms and punctuate the song excerpt in P19,1 and how I would translate the verb forms and punctuate the song as a stand-alone composition:

As Yisra’el looked on, the sun was stilled in Giv’on—  
the moon also, in Deer Valley!  
Yes, the sun stopped and the moon stood still—  
while a nation took vengeance on its enemies!

**19,1b And so the sun stopped. . . :** Note that the author of this *parashah* likely wanted the reader to understand this statement as narration, and not as direct speech of Yehoshua. See the discussion in the preceding note.

**19,1c the Scroll of the Most Esteemed:** This is the name of a collection of ancient songs and sayings that were thought to have great literary merit. The scroll must have been used as a source by the authors of the Deuteronomistic History. It is also mentioned by name in Sam [P68](#), where it is said that Dawiyd’s lament over Sha’ul and Yehonathan is preserved in the scroll.

**19,1d when Yahweh obeyed a man:** That is, when Yahweh “obeyed” Yehoshua’s call for the sun and moon to stop their passage across the sky. In Copernican terms, the earth would have stopped rotating on its axis and the moon would have stopped its orbit around the earth.

#### Notes to P19,2

**19,2a Don’t you dare delay... cut down whoever’s left:** Yehoshua employs highly idiomatic language in the two verb phrases here—likely a reflection of the author’s desire to make Yehoshua’s speech seem realistic to the reader. For the idiomatic use of עמד (“stand”) to mean “delay,” see BDB, p. 764, def. 3a of the *qal*. The second verb is from the root נב (“tail, stump”). The verb form of this root occurs only twice, but it is clear from the context that in this instance in Joshua it must mean “cut off the tail end, cut off the stump” (i.e. cut off the remnant of the Amorite kings’ forces). In my opinion, BDB, p. 275, is incorrect in proposing that it means “attack from the rear.”

**19,2b But when Yehoshua and the Yisra’elites were done with slaughtering them—a slaughter of gigantic proportions—and had finished them off:** More literally, “And it happened that when Yehoshua and the Yisra’elites had finished slaughtering them with a very great slaughter until they were finished off.”

**19,2c some who had survived managed to escape to fortified towns:** The mention of escapees comes out of the blue and then is not addressed later in the narrative, which is strange given the requirement that the escapees, like all other inhabitants of Kena’an, be subjected to the ban devotion. It is likely, in my opinion, that one or more sentences may have fallen out of the text. The narrative in this section of the *parashah* is quite confused—see note 19,2d directly below.

**19,2d returned to Yehoshua at their camp at Maqqedah well satisfied:** The narrative is confused. Yehoshua was last at Gilgal, and there is no report of him relocating to Maqqedah. I believe it is likely that one or more sentences treating the slaughter of the escapees (and the slaughter of the inhabitants of the towns they escaped to) has fallen from the text. The comment about the Yisra’elite forces being well satisfied makes most sense if we presume the preceding text narrated the slaughter of the escapees.

**19,2e “Don’t be afraid and don’t be discouraged,” Yehoshua said to them:** The imagery is quite striking: the leaders’ feet are on the kings’ necks as Yehoshua addresses them. It’s noteworthy that here Yehoshua repeats to the leaders of Yisra’el’s armed forces the command that Yahweh gave him at the opening of the book. Previously this command was only given to Yehoshua, but now he gives it to his subordinates. On the use of this command as a refrain in the book of Joshua, see note 1h above.

**19,2f at sunset Yehoshua gave the order and they took the corpses down from the trees:** In the opening speech of the book in P1, Yahweh tells Yehoshua that he must be sure “to act in accord with the entirety of the Torah that my servant Mosheh commanded you” and not depart from it in any way, in order that he might have success wherever he goes. Here in P19,2 we have an example of the author portraying Yehoshua as acting in accord with Mosheh’s Torah. By ordering the corpses of the kings to be taken down from the trees at sunset, Yehoshua is following the law in Deut P20,4; that law states that if a man is put to death and then hung from a tree, his

corpse cannot remain on the tree overnight but must be buried on that same day. See the end of P15 for another example of Yehoshua observing this law.

**19,2g** —: The Leningrad Codex has a *parashah petulah* here.

**19,3a giving over its king as a ban devotion:** Literally, “he made a ban devotion of its king.” I have translated to make more explicit to the modern reader what was understood by the ancient reader—that the ban devotion involves giving over or “devoting” a person or thing to one’s god by destroying the person or thing being devoted.

Notes to P19,3

**19,3b them:** Possibly a copyist’s error for “him.”

**19,3c** —: In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.

**19,4a they put it to the slaughter and killed every person in the town:** The author doesn’t state explicitly that the Yisra’elites made a ban devotion of the town and its inhabitants, but that is clearly implied in the following sentence, where the author states that Yehoshua did to Livnah’s king “just as he had done to Yeriyo’s king.” (Recall that Yehoshua made a ban devotion of Yeriyo’s king and his town in P12).

Notes to P19,4

**19,4b Yehoshua didn’t spare a single person** Literally, “he didn’t spare a single person.” The Hebrew is ambiguous, as the pronoun can be understood to refer to either Yehoshua or Yisra’el. The Hebrew reads more naturally if we understand “Yisra’el” as the antecedent, however the parallel statements in P19,3, P21, and P21,1 indicate that the author most likely intended Yehoshua to be the subject of the verb here.

**19,5a killing every person in the town, similar to all that they had done to Livnah:** The author doesn’t state explicitly that the Yisra’elites made a ban devotion of the town and its inhabitants, but that is clearly implied. See note 19,4a directly above.

Note to P19,5

**20a a ban devotion of every person there, similar to all that he had done to Lakiysh:** Note that the author here explicitly states Yehoshua made a ban devotion of Lakiysh—something that was only implied in his treatment of the slaughter of Lakiysh in the previous *parashah* (P19,5).

Note to P20

**21,1a Devirah:** While this might be a variant spelling of Devir, it is more likely, in my opinion, that the *he* represents a spelling error, with the author unintentionally writing the name with the *he*-locative appended under the influence of the preposition ל, which among its many uses can express geographical direction as well as signify either the direct object or the indirect object of a verb. It is also possible (but less likely in my opinion) to understand the presence of the *he* here as a relic of the old accusative ending, which might have shown up because the phrase לִדְבִירָה is more euphonic than the abrupt and harsh-sounding לִדְבִיר. On the origin of the *he*-locative in the old accusative ending, see GKC §90 *a-c*.

Notes to P21,1

**21,1b (and just as he had done to Livnah and its king):** It’s worth noting that the author here makes explicit Livnah was put to the ban devotion, something that was only implied in the description of Yehoshua’s battle against Livnah in P19,4.

**21,1c He spared no one and made a ban devotion of every living soul:** Here the author explicitly states that the conquest of the land was conducted as a ban devotion.

Note that that parallelism of the sentence indicates that “he spared no one” should be equated with “made a ban devotion of every **נִשְׁמָה**.” For this reason, I understand **נִשְׁמָה** to refer only to humans and not other living things, and I thus translate as “living soul” rather than living thing. See my comments on this topic in note 4h above and note 23,1b below.

**21,1d just as Yisra’el’s god Yahweh had commanded:** There is no place in Joshua where Yahweh specifically commands Yehoshua to carry out the ban devotion on the conquered towns. Thus, in writing this comment, the author almost certainly has in mind the law (given through Mosheh) in Deut **P19,4** stating that the Yisra’elites should carry out ban devotions on all towns in Kena’an that they fight against.

**21,1e Yehoshua killed them all, from Qadesh Barnea to Azzah and the entire Goshen region as far as Giv’on:** This is only the southern half of Kena’an; Yehoshua conquers the northern half in the following *parashot* (P22 - P23,1).

**21,1f for Yisra’el’s god Yahweh was fighting on Yisra’el’s behalf:** This phrase is a near verbatim repetition of the language used at the end of P19,1.

#### Notes to P22

**22a Yaviyn...sent messengers to...Madon...Shimron...Akshaph...and the kings in the north:** Yaviyn the king of Hatzor here forms an alliance with his fellow kings in the northern half of Kena’an to fight against the Yisra’elites.

**22b the Hiwwites were at the foot of Mount Hermon:** Note, Mount Hermon is in the far north of Kena’an. In P17 and P23,1, the Hiwwites are also said to be living in Giv’on, which is near Yerushalem and far to the south of Mount Hermon. Despite the general locations of the different native peoples given here in P22, we should presume that the traditions known to Joshua’s authors reflected a more complex reality in which there was a fair amount of migration among Kena’an’s native peoples.

#### Notes to P23

**23a Don’t be afraid of them:** This is the final occurrence of this phrase in the conquest narrative. As discussed in previous notes, it is used as a refrain throughout the conquest narrative to reinforce the theme of trusting in Yahweh to give the Yisra’elites victory, in keeping with the terms of his treaty with them. See note 1h above.

**23b came upon them unawares...and attacked them by surprise:** More literally, “came upon them suddenly...and fell upon them.” The verb clauses here provide a good example of how one must depart from a literal rendering to produce natural-sounding English. The concept of “suddenness,” which is natural in the Hebrew here, is jarring in English, as in English it implies that Yehoshua and his army were surprised. The Hebrew author almost certainly intended the reader to understand that it was the king of Hatzor and his alliance who were surprised, and not the Yisra’elites. I have translated to capture what I believe was the author’s intent.

#### Notes to P23,1

**23,1a while also killing its king in battle:** This translation reflects the most natural way to read the Hebrew (**וַיָּאֵחַ מֶלֶכָּהּ הַכָּה בַּחֶרֶב**). This reading is somewhat confused, however, as P22 and P23 imply that the king of Hatzor has already been killed in

battle. (The confusion here is likely original to the text; see note 23,1c below.) It is also possible to translate the Hebrew as “having already killed its king in battle;” this fits better with the narrative in P22 and P23, but it is a less natural way to read the Hebrew as it is written.

**23,1b not a living soul remained:** The term that I translate here as “living soul” is נשמה (literally, “breath”). We can be confident it means “living soul” and not “living being” because the phrase “sparing not a living soul” is used in parallel with “they slaughtered every human being.” See my comments on how to translate נשמה in notes 4h and 21,1c above.

**23,1c Yehoshua captured all the towns controlled by these kings, and he captured these kings as well:** The Hebrew is awkwardly expressed; moreover, the author has confused his narrative. In P22 - P23, he implies that these kings have already been killed. While it is a little odd that he has overlooked the earlier passage about these kings, it is fairly common to find inconsistencies such as this in ancient Hebrew narrative. The practices and customs of ancient narrative art did not require the sort of logic and consistency that we demand of narrative today.

**23,1d putting them all to the sword and making a ban devotion of them:** The pronoun “them” in this clause refers to the towns controlled by the northern kings.

**23,1e just as Mosheh Yahwehsservant had commanded:** A reference to Deut P19,4, which states the requirement to put all towns in Ken’an to the ban devotion when taking possession of the land. It is interesting to note that here the author attributes this commandment to Mosheh (presumably because he delivered the laws and precepts of Deuteronomy to the Yisra’elites). Apart from the reference here and the one discussed below in note 23,1g, all other references to Deut P19,4 in Joshua refer to the law as a commandment of Yahweh.

**23,1f they slaughtered every human being:** The slaughter is in keeping with the requirement in Deut P19,4 to put all the towns of Kena’an to the ban devotion.

**23,1g Exactly as Yahweh had commanded his servant Mosheh, so Mosheh commanded Yehoshua, and so Yehoshua did...:** The material from here to the end of the *parashah* serves as a summary of the conquest narrative and reads as though it was written at the direction of the lead editors of the Deuteronomistic History. As discussed in note 1a above, I believe these editors gave the principal authors of the individual books guidance on themes and likely made edits themselves to the books in the history. There is a similar summary of the division of the land in P47,11, likely also written by, or at the direction of, the lead editors of the Deuteronomistic History (see note 47,11a below).

With regard to the language here in P23,1 about Yahweh commanding Mosheh, Mosheh commanding Yehoshua, and then Yehoshua carrying out the command, I think it is clear that the author had in mind Deut P19,4 (the command to make a ban devotion of all towns in Kena’an). It is also possible that he had in mind Deut P29,1 (Mosheh’s command to Yehoshua to be strong and have courage in leading the people in the conquest of the land), in which case he would have meant for the reader to think of both of those *parashot*.

**23,1h he didn't deviate in any way from anything that Yahweh had commanded Mosheh:** The author here presents Yehoshua's conquest as being in keeping with the requirement in Deut P19,4 that all towns in lands that Yahweh gives to the Yisra'elites be subjected to the ban devotion. The text in Deut P19,4 states that no נשמה be spared. As I discuss above in note 4h, note 21,1c, and note 23,1b, this term should be understood to refer specifically to humans, and not to any other living creatures.

**23,1i And so Yehoshua took control of the land in its entirety...in the Levanon Valley below Mount Hermon in the north:** The author gives a description of the entire land of Kena'an, first describing the southern half ("the mountain country...and the desert plain") and then the northern half ("and also Yisra'el's mountain country and its low country"). This *parashah*, the following *parashah* (P23,2), and the list of kings given in P23,4 - P24,31 comprise the conclusion of the conquest narrative in the earliest version of the book of Joshua.

**23,1j from the barren mountain region extending to Se'iyr in the south all the way to Ba'al Gad...below Mount Hermon in the north:** In the previous clauses the author gives a general description of the lands in the southern half of Kena'an and the lands in the northern half of Kena'an; he concludes his description of Kena'an here by noting that those lands are bounded by Se'iyr in the south and Ba'al Gad in the north. I have added the clauses "in the south" and "in the north" to clarify for the modern reader how the ancient reader would have understood the text.

**23,1k it was Yahweh's plan to give them courage:** There is some slight tension here with the earlier statement in P9 that the Amorites had no desire to challenge the Yisra'elites. We should understand the statement in P9 to be a statement made for literary effect, with the purpose of highlighting the greatness of the miracle Yahweh performed in stopping the Yarden's waters. It is also possible to understand the sentence here to be written by the lead editor(s) of the Deuteronomistic History and the statement in P9 to be from the hand of the principal author of Joshua's first stage.

**23,1l and show them no mercy:** This clause is a good example of the departures a translator must make from a literal rendering of the text to produce a natural-sounding, functionally equivalent translation. Literally, "so that they [i.e. the inhabitants of Kena'an's towns] would not have [i.e. receive] any favor."

**23,1m just as Yahweh had commanded Mosheh:** The fourth reference in this *parashah* to Deut P19,4. The repetition serves to stress the importance of the ban devotion as the organizing principle of the conquest of the land. It is worth noting that in addition to the ban devotions of Yeriyo and Ay, the author emphasizes the ban devotion in the campaign against the allied kings from the southern half of Kena'an (P18 - P21,1) and also in the campaign against the allied kings from the northern half of Kena'an (P22 - P23,1).

#### Notes to P23,2

**23,2a that is, from all of Yehudah's mountain country and all of Yisra'el's mountain country:** I understand this clause to be an addition from the book's final compositional stage, added to clarify that Yehoshua killed all Anaqis living in the mountain country in both the north and the south.

**23,2b (There were, however, some that remained in Azzah, Gath, and Ashdod.):** I understand this clause to be an addition from the book's final compositional stage, added presumably to reflect an alternative tradition in which some Anaqis remained in towns settled by the Philishtines.

**23,2c Yehoshua took control of the entire land, exactly as Yahweh had told Mosheh:** This is a reference to the passage about Yehoshua in either Deut **P29,1** or Deut **P1**, both of which were part of the expansions made to Deuteronomy in connection with the original composition of the Deuteronomistic History.

The passage in P1 is especially interesting. The relevant part reads: "Moreover, Yahweh became inflamed with anger at me as well, on account of you all. 'You won't enter that land either,' he said. 'Instead, Yehoshua Nunsson—the man now serving as your personal attendant—is the one who will go there. Encourage him to be strong, for he's the one who will give Yisra'el possession of it!'" Upon rereading this passage now, I believe that Deut P1 refers to the original version of the scouting story in Num **P53 - P55**, which must have included a passage about Yahweh becoming angry at Mosheh on account of the Yisra'elites and telling him he would not enter the land. This passage must have been removed by the Aharonide authors of the fifth compositional stage of Numbers, as they invented a joint punishment of Mosheh and Aharon in Num **P69,1** in order to explain Aharon's death before arriving in the land. To create an event meriting such a joint punishment, they fabricated the story in **P68 - P69**, which they based on the story of the origin of the name of Massah-and-Meriyvah in Exodus **P29**. (Exodus P29 is part of the original version of Exodus that I believe was composed in connection with the creation of the Deuteronomistic History.)

**23,2d in accord with the divisions within their tribes:** Literally, "in keeping with their divisions for [or according to] their tribes." The meaning of the Hebrew is ambiguous; it is possible to interpret the phrase as meaning "in accord with how they divided [the land] for their tribes" or "in accord with the divisions within their tribes." I have a preference for the latter, but the former cannot be entirely ruled out. See P23,4 and P35, where this phrase is used in an identical fashion.

The phrase "the divisions within their tribes" refers to the clan structure. The allotment of the land that is the subject of the second half of the book grants land to the tribes, and within each tribe, to the clans. See, for example, P34, which speaks of individual allotments to clans within the tribe of Menashsheh.

**23,2e —:** The Leningrad Codex has a *parashah petuhah* here.

**23,3a Here are the kings of the land. . . :** I believe this entire *parashah* is a later addition to the text, made as part of the collaborative work between the Samaritans and Yehudeans during the second and third compositional stages. The addition had two purposes. First, the authors wished to make the conquest narrative comprehensive by including a summary description of the lands taken east of the Yarden, as there was no such summary in the original version of Joshua. Second, the Samaritan authors of the third stage would have wished to add this material as it included a description of the lands inhabited by the eastern Menashshehites. These authors made numerous additions to both Joshua and Numbers regarding the Menashshehites living east of the Yarden; the intent of these additions was to demonstrate that they are included

**Notes to P23,3**

among Yahweh's people and are also subject to the Yisra'elites' treaty with Yahweh.

**23,3b and the middle part of the wadi:** The text is confused. The parallel passages in Deut **P1,4**, Josh P25, and Josh P26 read "along with the town situated in the wadi-bed" (והעיר אשר בתוך הנחל); I believe the passage here originally had the same language, but the phrase "the town which is in" (העיר אשר ב) has fallen out of the text due to a copyist's error.

**23,3c the Kinroth Sea:** This body of water is what English-speakers today call the Sea of Galilee.

**23,3d from Teyman under the slopes of Mount Pisgah with the border:** The sentence breaks off unexpectedly; it is likely that some text has fallen out that specified where this southernmost region of Sihon's kingdom ended.

**23,3e Mosheh Yahwehsservant and the Yisra'elites defeated them...:** The final sentence of the *parashah* alludes to the stories in Num **P72** (the defeat of the Amorite kings Sihon and Og) and Num **P86 - P87** (Mosheh's grant of land to the Re'ubenites, Gadites, and half of the tribe of Menasheh). The authors of the *parashah* would have expected their audience to be familiar with this material in Numbers.

**Note to P23,4**

**23,4a in keeping with their tribal divisions:** The Hebrew is ambiguous; "in accord with their divisions" (כמחלקתם) may be understood as referring either to the tribal subunits (i.e. the clans) or to how the tribes had already divided the land among themselves. I prefer the former interpretation. See note 23,2d above.

**Note to P24**

**24a The king of Yeriho... thirty-one:** The list of thirty-one kings is laid out in both the **Aleppo Codex** and the **Leningrad Codex** in tabular form, with a *parashah setumah* after each king and after each occurrence of the number one. The list follows the standard format of lists in ancient Hebrew, in which the writer uses a *parashah setumah* to separate each item in the list. I have captured some of this format in my translation in the regular way that I indicate the *parashot setumot*: showing an *em-dash* on a new line and assigning the *parashah setumah* a number. However, I have not represented the *parashot setumot* separating the king from the number one in this way, as it creates a very confusing display on the page; instead I have simply represented these with a blank space in the text, which is how *parashot setumot* are indicated in the Hebrew text.

**Notes to P25**

**25a When Yehoshua had grown old...:** I do not believe this *parashah* was part of the earliest version of Joshua. In the earliest version of Joshua, Yehoshua and the Yisra'elites conquer the entire land and subject everyone in the land to the ban devotion, in fulfillment of the command given in Deut **P19,4**. I speculate that the authors of the second compositional stage, who I believe were primarily responsible for this *parashah* (P25), must have been bothered by traditions such as those preserved in Judges and Samuel about subsequent battles with local peoples. In order to explain how these peoples could be present in the land despite the command in Deuteronomy regarding the ban devotion, the authors of the second stage likely composed P25, which specifies that "a great deal of the land remains to take possession of" and that, even so, "you must be sure to allot it [i.e. the unconquered lands] to Yisra'el as its



property.”

As I discuss elsewhere, the book of Joshua likely was attached to the books of the Torah in the cult libraries at both Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion from the late sixth century BCE (when I believe cooperation between the two cults began in a significant way) down through the late fifth or early fourth century BCE. It was, I believe, around this time that the Samaritan priests at Mount Gerizim insisted on detaching Joshua from the books of the Torah. This was due to their own unique theology of land and their views on the initial occupation of Kena’an, which were in conflict with the principle of the ban devotion that the Deuteronomists had used to structure their account of the land’s occupation. (On evolution of the Samaritans’ views about the conquest of Kena’an, see my comments in notes 53d and 54n below.)

**25b [From the Shiyhor... the Kena’anites’ land.]:** I understand the text that I have translated within brackets to be a late addition to the text, made as part of the work on the final compositional stage of the book. The purpose of the addition, I believe, was to inform the reader that the land south of Eqron all the way to the Shiyhor River should be considered part of Kena’an, and not part of the Philistines’ districts (Eqron was a Philistine town).

**25c [The five princes... the one from Eqron.]:** As with the previous sentence, I understand this sentence that I have translated within brackets to be an addition made as part of Joshua’s final compositional stage. The comment was likely inserted into the text at a different time than the comment that immediately precedes it—that is, the two comments were products of different “editions” within the fifth stage.

**25d the Gevalites’ country:** I understand הגבלי (translated here as “the Gevalites”) to be the gentilic of גבל (Geval), which was a mountainous region south of the Dead Sea. There is no reason to emend the text as BDB, p. 148 proposes.

**25e [all of whom are Tziydonians]:** A gloss that has been inserted into the text, likely dating to the final compositional stage of the book.

**25f nine of the tribes plus half of the tribe of Menashsheh:** While I believe that the Yehudean authors of the second stage were primarily responsible for this *parashah*, the phrasing used here shows the influence of the Samaritan authors of the third stage, as the phrasing assumes the additions made to the text regarding the Menashshehites living east of the Yarden. As discussed elsewhere, I believe that the authors of the second and third stages worked closely together; even when one group of authors was primarily responsible for a body of material, the other group of authors would have needed to approve what was written and likely would have often conditioned their approval on the inclusion of certain language about issues important to them.

**25g (With the latter...:** I believe that all the material from here to the end of the *parashah* represents additions made at various times during Joshua’s final compositional stage.

**25h [he was one of the last Repha’ites whom Mosheh defeated and dispossessed]:** This comment, which I view as an addition from the final compositional stage of the book, alludes to Mosheh’s defeat of Og, which is told in Num [P72](#) and in Deut

**P1,4.** The passage in Deut P1,4 also refers to the tradition of Og being one of the last Repha'ites. The author of the addition here in Joshua likely had the passage in Deut P1,4 specifically in mind.

**25i exactly as Yahweh promised them:** More literally, “exactly as he told them.” The pronoun that is the subject of the verb may refer to either Yahweh or Mosheh; I have a slight preference for understanding the subject as Yahweh and have translated as such. The clause here is a reference to Deut **P18,2**, which uses nearly identical language. Note also similar references in Deut **P11** and Num **P65,1**, both of which—like this *parashah*—are from later compositional stages.

**25j \*\*:** The Leningrad Codex has a *parashah setumah* here.

## Notes to P26

**26a Mosheh gave the Re'uvénites' tribe their land. . . :** This *parashah* through P27,1 treat the apportionment of lands east of the Yarden. As discussed above in note 23,3a, the authors of the second and third stages wished to make the book of Joshua a comprehensive treatment of the conquest and apportionment of the lands possessed by the Yisra'elite tribes. This required them to insert material into Joshua about the eastern tribes, who took possession of their lands in the book of Numbers (Num **P86 - P87**). I believe that the Yehudean authors of the second stage were primarily responsible for P26 and P27, which describe the apportionment of lands to Re'úven and Gad, and I believe the Samaritan authors of the third stage were primarily responsible for the P27,1, which describes the apportionment of land to the eastern Menashshehites. As discussed below, there is some tension between the description of the lands apportioned to the Gadites and the lands apportioned to the eastern Menashshehites. It seems likely, in my opinion, that this represents a disagreement between the Yehudeans and Samaritans that could not be resolved, with both parties “agreeing to disagree.” See notes 27b and 27,1a below.

**26b in accord with their clan divisions:** That is, when Mosheh granted them their land, he divided it into parcels for each clan.

**26c [whom Mosheh defeated. . . in that country]):** This comment is almost certainly an addition from the final compositional stage of Joshua. It alludes to Mosheh's defeat of Sihon, which the author would have known from Num **P72** and from Deut **P1,3 - P1,4**, and it also alludes to Mosheh's defeat of Midyan's five kings, which the author would have known from Num **P85**.

**26d [The diviner Bil'am Be'orsson was among those...killed in battle.]:** This is another comment added in the final compositional stage of Joshua. The author of this comment may also have been the author of a similar addition to Num **P85**. See notes **85d** and **85,1b** in my translation of Numbers.

## Notes to P27

**27a (the Gadites):** I understand this phrase to be a variant of “the tribe of Gad.” It is likely the authors of a later compositional stage had copies of Joshua with these two variant readings and chose to preserve both in the text.

**27b all the towns of the Gil'ad region:** Note the tension with P27,1, which states that the eastern Menashshehites possess half of the Gil'ad region. As discussed above in note 26a, I believe this tension is a result of the Yehudean and Samaritan authors of the second and third stages being unable to resolve a disagreement regarding whether the eastern Menashshehites received any land in the Gil'ad region.

**27c the Kinnereth Sea:** This is an alternative spelling of the Kinroth Sea, which is mentioned in P23,3. The Kinnereth or Kinroth Sea is the body of water that modern-day English speakers call the Sea of Galilee.

**27d —:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.

**27,1a half of the region of Gil'ad:** Note the tension with P27, which states that the Gadites received “all the towns of the Gil'ad region.” See the comments in notes 26a and 27b above.

Notes to P27,1

**27,1b the property of the descendants of Makiyr Menashshehsson:** Makiyr, as we know from Num P76,6, was the only son of Menashsheh. Thus we see here in P27,1 that all of the land given to the tribe of Menashsheh east of the Yarden was the property of the clan of Makiyr. Note also the allotment of land to Menashsheh in P34, in which the tribe's entire allotment of land west of the Yarden is given to the Makiyrites.

**27,1c These were the tribes and clans that Mosheh gave territory to:** More literally, “It was these that Mosheh gave territory to.” This is a reference to the story of Mosheh's grant of land to the Re'ubenites, Gadites, and half of the tribe of Menashsheh in Num P86 - P87.

**27,1d when the Yisra'elites were camped:** I have added this phrase to make the author's meaning clear: he is not saying that the land given was located in the desert steppes of Mo'av, but rather that the desert steppes are where the Yisra'elites were when Mosheh apportioned the land east of the Yarden.

**27,1e \*\*:** The Leningrad Codex has a *parashah setumah* here.

**28a However, Mosheh did not allot...:** The authorship of this brief *parashah* is uncertain. It could be an addition from the book's final compositional stage; it is also possible to understand it as a product of the joint authorship of the authors of the second and third compositional stages. I favor the former view, as I believe that if the *parashah* had been added by the authors of the second and third stages, it would have been longer than just a single sentence. For example, I believe these authors were responsible for Num P65,1, a substantial and important *parashah* written to justify the Lewites' special role in the cult and to explain their landless condition. If these individuals had also authored Josh P28, we would expect to see additional material that is closer to what we see in Num P65,1.

Notes to P28

A second reason why I think it is better to view Josh P28 as part of the fifth compositional stage is that it uses nearly identical language to the additions on the topic of the Lewites' lack of property found in Deut P11 and Deut P18,2. It is reasonable to suppose that the authors of the fifth stage noticed there was no mention

in Joshua of why the Lewites received no allotment with the other tribes, and so added this *parashah* to address that issue; in doing so, it would have been natural for them to borrow language from Deuteronomy on this same topic. The placement of this *parashah* is quite logical, as it follows immediately after the material from an earlier addition about the apportionment of land to the eastern tribes. Thus P25 - P28 collectively address the apportionment (or non-apportionment) of property to the tribes that are not allotted property at Gilgal and Shiloh in P28,1 - P43.

**28b just as he promised them he would be:** The author likely is referring here specifically to Deut P18,2, which uses nearly identical language. See also note 25i above.

**28c —:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.

#### Notes to P28,1

**28,1a These are the territories that the Yisra'elites took possession of in Kena'an:** I understand the core of this *parashah* to be part of the earliest version of Joshua, although the *parashah* has been heavily edited by the authors of the second and third compositional stages. I believe the original version of Joshua did include most of the material in P28,1 - P43,1, which specifies the land and towns that each tribe received by lot. For the authors of the Deuteronomistic History, the allotment of the land in Joshua is not only the fulfillment of Yahweh's command to Mosheh in Num P88,2 (which I believe was part of the earliest version of Numbers), but is one of the climactic events in the history Yahweh's relationship with his people. Thus it would be odd if a detailed description of the land possessed by the Yisra'elites was not in the earliest version of the Deuteronomistic History.

**28,1b which El'azar the Priest and Yehoshua Nunsson and the heads of the tribal families allotted to them:** I understand the mention of El'azar the Priest to be an addition by the authors of the second compositional stage. In the original version of Joshua, it likely was only Yehoshua and the family heads of the tribes who apportioned the land to the tribes by lot.

The Hebrew of this clause is deceptively simple. Literally, "regarding which El'azar the Priest and Yehoshua Nunsson and the heads of the tribal families allotted them to the Yisra'elites." I have replaced "the Yisra'elites" with the pronoun "them," as modern English is much less accepting of repetition of names than ancient Hebrew.

**28,1c Their territory was determined by lot, exactly as Yahweh had commanded through Mosheh:** The authors make a point of mentioning that the apportionment by lot is in keeping with Yahweh's command to Mosheh. The mention of Yahweh's command to Mosheh is a reference to Num P88,2, which records Yahweh's command to Mosheh regarding the occupation and division of the land.

**28,1d for nine-and-a-half tribes (for Mosheh...any property among them):** I understand this material to be an addition by the Samaritan authors of the third compositional stage. I believe that the Samaritans insisted on the inclusion of the Menashshehites living east of the Yarden in the stories of the conquest and settlement of the land, to demonstrate that they too were part of Yahweh's people and received land from him. This prompted a large number of edits to Numbers and Joshua, including the edit here in P28,1. In the earliest version of the Deuteronomistic History, which was

wholly a southern composition, the Menashshehites living east of the Yarden were omitted from the narratives about the eastern tribes in Numbers and Joshua.

**28,1e [For the Yosephites...personal property.]:** I understand this sentence to be an addition from the final compositional stage of Joshua, explaining to the reader the math behind twelve tribes receiving land. That is, there were twelve tribes, but one tribe received no land, and one other tribe consisted of two tribes.

**28,1f Just as Yahweh commanded Mosheh...their land.:** I understand this sentence to be original to the *parashah* and to be part of the first compositional stage. The phrase “just as Yahweh had commanded Mosheh” is another reference to Yahweh’s command to Mosheh in Num **P88,2**.

**29a The Yehudeans went to see Yehoshua at Gilgal:** This *parashah*, which I date to the first compositional stage, appears out of place. I believe that in the original edition of Joshua, P29 followed P24,31 and preceded P28,1. The authors of the second compositional stage (with the approval of the authors of the third stage) likely moved P29 to its current place because they felt all material about the division of the land should follow the introduction to the land’s division in P28,1.

Notes to P29

This *parashah* was composed in order to demonstrate the fulfillment of Yahweh’s promise to Mosheh in Num **P54** that Kalev’s descendants would take possession of the land that Kalev had traversed on the scouting expedition narrated in Num **P53**. Given the importance of the scouting story in Numbers within the overall wilderness narrative, and given Kalev’s prominent role in that story, it is not surprising that the authors of the first stage felt the need to compose P29. It bears repeating here that it was of great importance to the authors of Joshua’s first compositional stage to demonstrate that the events they are narrating represent the fulfillment of promises made in Exodus-Numbers and Deuteronomy. They mention in several places that Yahweh’s earlier promises are now being fulfilled. The most prominent example of this is P47,11, which serves as a summary statement for the entire occupation of the land and is related to the fulfillment of the treaty blessings in Deuteronomy.

**29b the holy man Mosheh:** The application of the phrase “holy man” (אִישׁ הַאֱלֹהִים) to Mosheh also appears in the heading to the blessing of Mosheh in Deut **P34**, which I believe was added at a much later stage than the material here. The phrase functions like an honorific surname “Holyman.” I do not translate as a surname here because it would create confusion with the surname Yahwehsservant, which appears in the following sentence.

**29c I followed unwaveringly after my god Yahweh:** The author uses the same unusual verbal construction as that found in the story of the exploration of the land in Num **P54**, where Kalev is said to “follow unwaveringly after” (מֵלֵא אַחֲרַי) Yahweh.

**29d Mosheh swore to me at that time that:** The Hebrew represents Mosheh’s oath to Kalev as direct speech; in keeping with usual English practice, I have translated as indirect speech. On Hebrew’s preference for direct speech in places where English speakers prefer indirect speech, see note 17j above.

**29e forty-five years:** The authors of Joshua's first compositional stage never say explicitly how long it took for Yehoshua and the Yisra'elites to conquer the land—near the end of P23,1 they simply state that “Yehoshua made war against these kings for a long time.” However from Kalev's mention here in P29 that forty-five years have elapsed from when he explored the land, we can deduce that the authors of the first stage believed that the conquest of the land took between five and six years. (The scouting expedition from Qadesh Barnea in Num P53 - P54 took place sometime in the first year after leaving Egypt.)

**29f since he made that promise about me to Mosheh:** Literally, “since Yahweh spoke that word to Mosheh.” The author is alluding to Yahweh's speech to Mosheh in Num P54 that he would bring Kalev to the land that he had traversed on the Yisra'elites' scouting expedition, and that his descendants would take possession of it.

**29g even with respect to joining military campaigns and carrying out missions:** The Hebrew is highly idiomatic. Literally, “with respect to war, going out (יָצָא) and coming in (בָּא).” The two verbs, “go out” and “come in,” when used together in a military context specifically have the meaning of “participate in a military campaign, carry out a military mission.” See, for example, this usage in Sam P41,2 in reference to Dawiyd's military exploits: “for he was regularly performing missions in full view of them” (כִּי־הָיָא יוֹצֵא וּבָא לִפְנֵיהֶם).

**29h there were Anaqis there in the mountains with large, well-fortified towns:** Here Kalev alludes to the report that the scouts gave to Mosheh and the Yisra'elites after returning from their expedition to explore Kena'an in Num P53.

**29i perhaps Yahweh will be with me and I'll dispossess them, just as Yahweh promised:** There are two inconsistencies in the text here that I believe are the result of the ancient authors' approach to their narrative art. First, in P23,2 (which, like P29, is from the first compositional stage) the authors state that the Anaqis have already been exterminated, and moreover, that it was Yehoshua (not Kalev) who exterminated them. Second, Kalev's speech here implies that Yahweh promised he would be the one to dispossess the Anaqis, but in fact, there is no promise to that effect in the surviving traditions about Kalev in Numbers and Deuteronomy. But both these inconsistencies are understandable in light of the literary practices of the ancient authors. Ancient authors often strove to maximize emotional impact when writing their narrative, and they regularly prioritized the achievement of emotional impact over logical consistency. This feature is most striking in the stories in Genesis, but it can be seen in many places in ancient Hebrew narrative. I believe that this emphasis on achieving emotional impact is the reason the author of P29 has included Kalev's statement that he hopes Yahweh will be with him and that he will dispossess the Anaqis. Another way that ancient Hebrew authors achieved heightened emotional impact in their narrative was through repetition, including the repetition of formulaic phrases. This I believe is the explanation for the phrase “just as Yahweh promised” in Kalev's statement—in this particular instance, it likely doesn't allude to any actual tradition, but is simply used to reinforce to the reader Kalev's special status.

**29j [Hevron was...among the Anaqis.]:** The sentence that I have placed within brackets is a late comment added as part of the final compositional stage.

**29k And so the land rested from war:** This sentence doesn't make much sense in its current context, as it occurs in material about the division of the land. The sentence also appears at the end of P23,2, where it serves to draw the conquest narrative to a close. It is unclear to me how best to explain the presence of this sentence in both *parashot*. Although it is impossible to have much confidence in any explanation, I speculate that the sentence here in P29 may be an addition made in the second compositional stage, before later authors of the same stage had moved P29 after P28,1 (see note 29a above for my proposal that P29 originally preceded P28,1). In this scenario, the authors might have wished to add this sentence because this *parashah* represented the final events prior to the commencement of the allotment of the land to the tribes that begins in P28,1.

**30a at the outlet flowing south:** More literally, "from the tongue facing southwards." In the geographical descriptions in Joshua, the authors use the preposition מן ("from") to indicate the point where a border or a territory "starts" or "begins."

Notes to P30

**30b southwards:** The author's phrasing is unusual. Literally, "towards from the south" (אל מנגב). The preposition מן ("from") attached to a geographical direction such as "south" or "north" appears to be an idiomatic usage, with the preposition not contributing anything to the overall meaning. BDB recognizes this idiomatic usage of the preposition; see the citations in BDB, p. 616 and p. 860.

**30c [This will serve as your border on the south.]:** The sentence that I have placed within brackets is a late comment added as part of the final compositional stage. The authors' rationale for adding this comment, however, is unclear to me. Possibly it is a variant reading of the previous clause that they wished to preserve.

**30d begins at the inlet to the sea:** More literally, "from the tongue of the sea." See note 30a above.

**30e Mount Se'iy:** This is a mountain in Yehudah; it is not the more famous mountain in Edom that is mentioned numerous times in the books of the Torah. The name has the connotation of something like "Hairy Mountain" or "Billy Goat Mountain." The name is not particularly unusual, so it is not surprising that there are multiple places with this name.

**30f Now Kalev Yephunnehsson...:** I understand the text from here to the end of the *parashah* to be an addition made as part of the last compositional stage of Joshua. This material is a duplicate of a passage in Judges P2 (=Jud 1.11-15). It records additional material about Kalev that the authors of that stage may have believed to be ancient; their rationale for inserting it into Joshua presumably would have been to make it part of the authoritative record of the settlement of the land. It is interesting to note that this passage does preserve a tradition about Kalev driving out Anaqis. It is likely, in my opinion, that the mention of Kalev driving out Anaqis in P29—which I believe was a simple literary device—was understood by later readers to indicate a real tradition, and as a result a story grew up among these later readers to explain the

reference in P29. See the discussion in note 29i above.

**30g Give me a gift:** The word for blessing (ברכה) was often used colloquially by ancient Hebrew speakers to mean what English-speakers would call a gift. I believe that is the usage here, and I have translated accordingly. It's worth noting how the author has characterized Aksah in this short passage—she comes across as impatient and demanding. She presses her husband to ask her father for pasture land (presumably to supplement her dowry), but in her impatience doesn't wait for him to act. As soon as she slips off her ass to meet her father, she takes the opportunity to demand that he give her a gift (again, presumably to supplement her dowry). However, rather than ask for pasture land, she is even bolder and asks for secure sources of water.

- Note to P31**      **31a Twenty-nine towns total:** But note that thirty-six towns are listed.
- Notes to P31,1**      **31,1a Fourteen:** Note that fifteen towns are listed.
- 31,1b —:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.
- Note to P31,1**      **31,3a —:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.
- Note to P31,4**      **31,4a —:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.
- Note to P31,6**      **31,6a —:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.
- Notes to P31,7**      **31,7a Eleven towns plus their hamlets:** This is the total of the towns in the mountains, which are listed in this *parashah* and the preceding *parashah* (P31,6).
- 31,7b —:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.
- Note to P31,9**      **31,9a —:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.
- Note to P31,10**      **31,10a \*\*:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.
- Note to P32**      **32a Ba'al's Village:** This village is mentioned in the description of the borders of the territory allotted to Yehudah in P30, where it is called Ba'al<sup>ah</sup> instead of Ba'al's Village.
- Note to P32,1**      **32,1a [But as for the Yevusites...down to the present day.]:** I understand the text that I have placed within brackets to be a late comment added as part of the editorial work on the final compositional stage of Joshua.
- Notes to P33**      **33a The lot next fell to the Yosephites, beginning at the Yarden:** The text describing the Yosephites' territory in the first paragraph of this *parashah* appears to be quite corrupt, as it does not provide a complete description of the Yosephites' borders (see note 33b directly below). In addition, the opening sentence of the *parashah* does not read smoothly. Based on the parallel grammatical structures seen at the beginning of P39, P40, P41, P42, and P43, I believe it is likely that the phrase יהי גבולם ("their territory was") originally followed "the Yosephites" but has fallen out of the text. If that phrase were inserted into the text, the translation would read, "The lot next fell to the Yosephites. Their territory began at the Yarden..."



**33b These are its western coordinates:** The text is confusing and it is likely that at least two or three sentences have fallen out of the text. The description preceding this sentence defines only the Yosephites' southern border (which is the same as Binyaminites' northern border, as described in P36). The Yosephites' borders in the other directions are missing.

**33c From Tappuah...its western coordinates:** The text is confusing and these two sentences seem out of place. The Ephrayimites' borders are fully described in the preceding sentences. It is possible that these sentences were a comment by a later editor clarifying the western border, but there is really no way to know what is going on here.

**33d But they didn't drive out the Kena'anites...serving as slave labor:** I believe the final sentence of this *parashah* is an addition to the text, as it reflects the idea that not all native peoples were exterminated in the ban devotion. In the earliest version of Joshua, the Yisra'elites slaughter or drive out all the peoples of Kena'an except the Giv'onites. The idea that the Yisra'elites did not entirely exterminate the native peoples in the conquest appears in material that I assign to the second and third compositional stages and also to the fifth stage. I believe the addition here is most likely from the fifth stage, as editorial work in this stage inserted brief comments at numerous places making mention of non-Yisra'elite peoples living in the land.

In the later compositional stages of Joshua, the authors perhaps felt some discomfort with the tension between the complete annihilation of the native peoples as portrayed in the earliest material of Joshua and the existence of traditional stories (such as those found in Judges) involving both Yisra'elites and native peoples, not to mention the fact that many non-Yisra'elite clans and peoples inhabited the land during their own day. Through additions such as the one here, the authors resolve this tension, while still maintaining the superiority of the Yisra'elites by stressing that the native peoples who were not driven out served as the Yisra'elites' slave labor.

**34a The next lot fell to the tribe of Menashsheh...** I understand the entire first paragraph of this *parashah* to be an addition from the third compositional stage. In addition to giving Menashsheh its own lot (in the earliest version of Joshua, there is a single lot for the Yosephites), the authors added this material in order to remind the reader that the eastern Menashshehites were included in Yahweh's people. As discussed above, I believe that the earliest version of Joshua and Numbers omitted any discussion of the Menashshehites living east of the Yarden, and that the Samaritan authors of the third stage corrected this oversight. While most if not all of the Samaritan authors of the third stage likely were Lewites, it is quite likely that many would have married women from Menashshehite clans, for Shekem and Mount Gerizim are located near the border between Menashsheh and Ephrayim. So it is natural to see why the Samaritan authors would have objected to the exclusion of their eastern kinsmen from the authoritative history of Yahweh's relationship with his people.

Notes to P34

**34b The Gil'ad region and the Bashan region belonged to him:** It is noteworthy that the author claims Gil'ad for Menashsheh. As discussed above in note 26a, note 27b, and note 27,1a, there is real tension in Joshua regarding possession of the Gil'ad

region. In the earliest version of Joshua, the Gadites occupied all of the Gil'ad region and the eastern Menashshehites were not mentioned at all. More than a century later, the Samaritan authors of the third stage (certainly with the approval of their Yehudean counterparts) inserted the eastern Menashshehites into Numbers and Joshua in order that they be included among Yahweh's people. However, the Samaritans and the Yehudeans were unable to agree on the exact ownership of the Gil'ad. In the addition in P27,1, the Samaritans claim half of the Gil'ad region for Menashsheh and here in P34, they claim all of it. In P27, the Yehudean authors claim all towns in Gil'ad for Gad. This seems to be one instance in which the Samaritans and Yehudeans "agreed to disagree."

**34c Now Tzelopphad Hephersson...**: I understand all the material in this *parashah* about the daughters of Tzelopphad Hephersson to be a late addition to the text, as it is dependent on Num P77,2 - P78, which I assign to the sixth compositional stage of Numbers (the end of the Persian period or the beginning of the Hellenistic period). This addition provides a glimpse of the complicated composition dynamics of Joshua and the books of the Torah. By the time this material was added, Joshua had already been separated from the books of the Torah and I believe the Samaritan priests had ceased contributing to Joshua, which as I argue in my translation of Leviticus, they had rejected due to their own evolving views regarding the occupation of the land. However, at this time, the Samaritans were still collaborating on the books of the Torah, and I believe they were responsible for the addition in Num P77,2 - P78 (which would have been approved by the priests at Mount Zion). Once this material was added to Numbers, it seems likely that the priests at Mount Zion chose to add the material about Tzelopphad's daughters receiving allotments here in Josh P34. For these priests, the book of Joshua represented the fulfillment of the many promises and commands made by Yahweh and Mosheh about the occupation of the land. Thus once the promise of inheritance for Tzelopphad's daughters was added to Numbers, the priests working in Yehud would have felt obligated to show that promise being fulfilled in Joshua.

**34d reminding them that Yahweh had commanded Mosheh to give them some property**: This passage is written in direct discourse in the Hebrew, but it is more natural in English to use indirect discourse here. Yahweh's command to Mosheh to give Tzelopphad's daughters property specifically appears in Num P78.

**34e some property was given to them**: The verb form here is the third-person masculine singular of the *qal* ("he gave"). As discussed above in note 7,1a, ancient Hebrew often used an indefinite subject with an active verb in place of the passive, and that is how I understand the usage here. Note that the antecedent to the subject of the verb is El'azar, Yehoshua, and the tribal chieftains; if the author had intended them to be the subject of the verb, he would have conjugated the verb as a third-person masculine plural.

**34f ten allotments fell to Menashsheh apart from the Gil'ad and Bashan regions**: That, is the tribe of Menashsheh received ten allotments in Kena'an, which were distributed among Tzelopphad's five daughters and the six clans (Eviy'ezer, Heleq, Asriy'el, Shekem, Hephher, and Shemiyda). It is unclear if the daughters received only

four allotments instead of five (Mahlah and No'ah are linked, and possibly shared an allotment), or whether one of the six clans had property only east of the Yarden and nothing to the west.

**34g The territory of Menashsheh began...**: I date the material from here to the end of the *parashah* to the first compositional stage. Originally this material would have followed directly from the conclusion of the description of the Ephrayimites' territory in P33. Note that the beginning of P33 mentions a single lot for the Yosephites (that is, Ephrayim plus Menashsheh), so there was no need to mention a lot here in the oldest layer of P34.

**34h and its furthest reaches extending to the sea:** The Hebrew is somewhat difficult; I understand the text to mean that the territory being described (which is the southern extremity of Menashsheh) runs along the Wadi Qanah all the way to the Mediterranean sea.

**34i the territory's furthest reaches touched Asher in the north and Yissakar in the east:** The author is describing the northern boundary of Menashsheh. The text is confusing to the modern reader because the Hebrew is elliptical and the subject of the verb is omitted. I have added the phrase "the territory's furthest reaches" (תצאתיו) to clarify what I believe is the verb's implied subject.

**34j the Heights:** The term "the Heights" is almost certainly an abbreviation for the region of Dor Heights. This is suggested by a review of citations given in BDB, p. 632, although BDB does not itself propose this reading.

**34k However, the Menashshehites were not able...**: I believe the final two sentences of this *parashah* are an addition to the text. It is possible the addition was made by the authors of the second and third stages of Joshua, but I believe it was more likely made by the authors of the final compositional stage, who made a number of additions mentioning exceptions to the complete annihilation of the native inhabitants (in violation of Yahweh's command in Deut P19,4). See note 33d above for another example of such an addition.

**34.1a Why did you give property...**: I believe this entire *parashah* is an addition made by the Samaritan authors of the third compositional stage of Joshua. Note in particular the presence of the theme of Yahweh blessing the two tribes and making them numerous. The promise of population growth is one of the key themes of the book of Genesis, which I believe was originally a Samaritan book. Thus it is not surprising to see the theme here in a discussion of the northern tribes in an addition by the Samaritans. The story in this *parashah* is very strange, as it assumes the conquest is not complete and that the tribes can expand beyond the allotment they were given. This view is far removed from the authors of Joshua's first stage, and is a reflection of the different ideas that the authors of the second and third stages had about the nature of the conquest and possession of the land. In material contributed by them elsewhere, we see a consistent acknowledgement of the continued existence of native peoples within the land, a view that is totally at odds with the authors of the first stage.

Notes to P34,1

On a separate topic, note that in P33, which was written by Yehudean authors in the book's first compositional stage, there is one lot cast for the Yosephites—that is, they have a single allotment of territory. It is interesting to speculate that the addition of P34,1 may have been prompted by the Samaritans' irritation at the Yehudean authors' portrayal of just a single lot for the two most prominent northern tribes.

**34,1b property consisting of a single allotment and a single district:** The Samaritan authors of this *parashah* seem to have viewed the allotment given to the Yosephites as quite small—smaller than what is commonly shown on maps of the twelve tribes' territories like the one reproduced at the end of this book. Our ability to understand the geography of the territories described in Joshua is quite limited, as often we can do little but guess at a general location for the place names listed. Complicating matters further, the geographical descriptions in Joshua are often confused because the ancient authors themselves had an incomplete knowledge of the geography behind the traditions about the tribal territories.

**34,1c You can see how much:** The author writes **עַד אֲשֶׁר עַד כֹּה** ("as far as that which as far as here" or "up to now"; see BDB, p. 462, def. 3). The phrase is clearly an idiom, and we must guess its meaning from context.

**34,1d It's true that you're a large people:** More literally, "If [it's the case that] you're a large people." The presence of the particle "if" (**אם**) is unexpected and its use here is somewhat unusual. It functions as a conditional that is expected to be true, similar to the use described in BDB, p. 50, def. 1b(4). I have translated with a functionally equivalent English expression.

**34,1e you'll feel squeezed in by Ephrayim's mountain country if you live only there:** I have departed further than usual from a literal rendering to capture the vividness of the Hebrew. Literally, "Ephrayim's mountain country is going to be [too] confining for you."

**34,1f The mountain country's not even ours!:** The Hebrew is somewhat difficult. Literally, "The mountain country is not found to be ours." The verb **נִמְצָא** ("find") in the *niph'al* is often used idiomatically with the meaning "happen to be," which I believe is the meaning here ("the mountain country doesn't happen to be ours"). My translation reflects the context, which is that Yehoshua has advised the Yosephites to expand beyond the mountain country, and the Yosephites reply by objecting that they don't even have possession of the mountain country—it's controlled by people in neighboring areas who make use of iron chariots.

There is no reason to propose, as does BDB p. 594, def. 3 of the *niph'al*, that the verb form **נִמְצָא** here means "be sufficient."

**34,1g All the Kena'anites who live in the low country have iron chariots:** Literally, "Iron chariots are [present] among all the Kena'anites who live in the low country."

**34,1h "You are a large people...":** The final paragraph of this *parashah* reads as a variant to the preceding two paragraphs. I believe the authors of this *parashah* composed two different versions of the end of this *parashah*, and later editors chose to preserve both versions.

**35a The community of Yisra'elites met at Shiloh, where they had set up the Meeting Tent...** I understand this entire *parashah* to be an addition made by priestly authors from Mount Gerizim, who were responsible for Joshua's third compositional stage. The presence of the Meeting Tent is a clear indication of these authors' involvement. (On the Meeting Tent being a Samaritan concept, see the discussion in the introductory note to my translation of Leviticus and the comments in note 27e of my translation of Numbers.) The Meeting Tent is mentioned in Joshua in only two places—here and in P43,1—and I understand both passages to have been composed by priests in Yahweh's cult at Mount Gerizim. The authors of Joshua's second compositional stage (priests associated with the cult at Mount Zion) and third compositional stage (priests associated with the cult at Mount Gerizim) were also responsible for all the material in Exodus and Numbers that I date to the fifth century BCE. Thus, it is not surprising to see that the language used here in P35—"community" (העדה) and "meet, assemble" (the *niph'al* of קהל)—is characteristic of authors of the compositional stages of Numbers and Exodus that I date to the same period.

One can imagine that there must have been some disagreement between the priests at Mount Gerizim and those at Mount Zion regarding where the division of land took place. Those from Mount Zion wished to maintain the original structure of Joshua, in which all nine tribes in Kena'an received their allotments at Gilgal (the Yehudites, the Yosephites, the Binyaminites, the Shim'onites, the Zevulunites, the Yissakarites, the Asherites, the Naphtalites, and the Danites). The priests from Mount Gerizim must have argued that the allotment must have taken place at Shiloh in front of the Meeting Tent, to indicate the casting of the lots was approved by Yahweh. What we have in Joshua is the compromise that the two groups of authors arrived at: the allotments for Yehudah and the Yosephites (the most important tribes) would be performed at Gilgal, in keeping with the original version of Joshua, and then the allotments for the remaining western tribes would be carried out at Shiloh in front of the Meeting Tent. If we take seriously the idea that much of the Persian-period material in the books of the Torah and of Joshua is the result of a collaborative effort between Yahweh's priesthoods in Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion, then we should recognize that much of what appears in the text before us was intensively negotiated between the two groups, and the resulting compromises often resulted in a text that is perceived as inconsistent or confusing by those unaware of the composition dynamics behind the text.

In the books of Leviticus and Numbers, we see many similar instances of confusion or duplication in the text that I believe are best explained as a result of a highly negotiated compromise between the priesthoods in Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion. See, for example, my discussion of this issue in notes 7a and 21i in my translation of Leviticus.

**35b subdued by them:** The preposition לפני ("in front of") is often used to express agency ("by, through"), especially in descriptions of military encounters (on this phenomenon, see note 14k above). That is how I understand the usage of the preposition here.

**35c that had not received their division of property:** More literally, “whose property they had not divided.” On the predilection of ancient Hebrew authors to use an active verb with an indefinite subject in place of the passive, see above note 7,1a.

**35d How long are you going to be lazing about...:** The author of this passage employs vivid language to depict Yehoshua’s frustration with the Yisra’elites for their lack of initiative. This passage is one of only three places in Joshua where Yehoshua shows any real emotion and appears to the reader as more than a one-dimensional character. The other instances of Yehoshua displaying real emotion are in P13,2, when he complains to Yahweh after the defeat at Ay, and in P17, when he expresses anger at the Giv’onites for their deception.

**35e make a record of their property and its measurements:** More literally, “record it according to the measure [or amount] of their property.” That is, make a written description of the land’s measurements so that it can be divided into appropriately sized districts. The phrase “their property” (נחלתם) refers to the remaining land in Kena’an that will be allotted to the seven tribes.

**35f I will then cast lots for you:** It’s worth noting how the author conceives the action: twenty-one men (three from each of the seven tribes that have yet to receive land) survey the land and divide it into seven districts. Yehoshua then casts lots to determine which tribe receives which district.

**35g in front of our god Yahweh:** That is, in front of the Meeting Tent.

**35h the Lewites won’t have an allotment among you, for Yahweh’s priesthood will serve as their property:** To the author of this *parashah*, the Lewites are in control of the priesthood. I believe the language here indicates that the author was writing in the early or mid-fifth century, before the Aharonides had assumed exclusive control of the priesthood and demoted all other Lewite families to subordinate (non-priestly) roles within the cult. On the Aharonide demotion of all other Lewite families (which I date to the late fifth century), see Num [P65,1](#) and my comments and notes on that *parashah* in my translation of Numbers.

**35i in front of Yahweh:** Another reference to the Meeting Tent. See note 35g above.

**35j in front of Yahweh:** The final reference to the Meeting Tent in this *parashah*.

## Notes to P36

**36a The lot was cast for the Binyaminites’ tribe:** I understand the verb here to be the *hiph’il* of עלה (“cause to go up”). The exact action by which the lot is cast is unclear to me. Given the verb used, it is conceivable that the lot was thrown up in the air and allowed to fall on the ground. It is possible to understand the subject of the verb either as indefinite or as Yehoshua. I have a preference for the former and translate in the passive. (On the use of an active verb with an indefinite subject for the passive, see note 7,1a above.)

It is worth noting that the first two tribes who receive an allotment from the division of land at Shiloh are from the south—Binyamin (P36) and Shim’on (P38). The authors of the second and third compositional stages likely did not change the order in which the tribes were allotted territory. The first stage of Joshua was a purely

southern book, so it is perhaps unsurprising that after Yehudah and the Yosephites, the next tribes allotted territory were from the south.

**36b the mountain that is south of Lower Beyth-Horon:** It is unclear whether this mountain had no name or whether the author was unaware of its name.

**36c Ba'al's Village:** In the description of the borders of the tribe of Yehudah in P30, this town is called Ba'alalah. In P32, which is part of the list of towns belonging to Yehudah, it is called Ba'al's Village, as here in P36.

**36d The southern side begins...:** Binyamin and Yehudah share a border. It is interesting to compare the description of the shared border—Binyamin's southern border here in P36 is less detailed than the description of Yehudah's northern border in P30.

**36e goes west:** It is likely, in my opinion, that this is an error for "goes east," as the description of the southern border begins at the western edge of the territory and ends at the eastern edge. The error—accidentally writing "west" (ימה) rather than "east" (מזרחה)—might have been made by the original author or by a later scribe.

**36f the mountain opposite Hinnomsson's Valley:** It is unclear whether this mountain had no name or whether the author was unaware of its name.

**36g the steppe:** Translation of ערבה. In the parallel passage in P30, which describes the northern border of the Yehudites' territory, the author writes בית הערבה ("Aridville") rather than ערבה.

**36h \*\*:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* here.

**37a Aridville:** See note 36g above.

**Notes to P37**

**37b Cowtown:** Literally, "The Cow." I presently live in the rural hinterlands of Fort Worth, Texas, which the locals affectionately call "Cowtown."

**37c Qiryath:** The word Qiryath means "village." We expect to see a word following Qiryath that provides the full name of the village, similar to the names Qiryath-Sepher ("Scroll Village") and Qiryath Ye'ariym ("Forest Village"). It is possible that the second word of the name has fallen out of the text here.

**38a The second lot fell to Shim'on:** See note 36a above.

**Notes to P38**

**38b Their territory was contained within the Yehudites' territory:** It is worth noting here the inconsistency with P35, in which Yehoshua tells the seven tribes that when he divides up their land, Yehudah and Yoseph will retain their original allotments ("Yehudah will remain in its territory in the south"). I understand this inconsistency as due to different authorship—P38 is part of the first compositional stage, and I understand P35 to belong to the third compositional stage. In this case, I think it likely that the author of P35 may have simply overlooked the fact that P38 states that the Yehudites' territory was carved up and part was given to the Shim'onites.

**38c thirteen towns and their hamlets:** Fourteen towns are listed.

- Notes to P39**      **39a The third lot fell to the Zevulunites. . . :** There is not much detail in the description of the Zevulunites' borders, and it seems likely to me that the author had incomplete information about them.
- 39b and then at Mar'elah:** The text is confused; a verb appears to have dropped out of the text.
- 39c goes around it:** The text is confused; the pronoun "it" has no clear antecedent. Some language preceding this sentence may have dropped out of the text.
- 39d Beyth Lehem:** This is a different Beyth Lehem than its famous namesake, which was located south of Yerushalem.
- 39e twelve towns and their hamlets:** Only five towns are listed; it is likely that the author was also counting the seven towns mentioned in the immediately preceding text (Gath, Hephher, Ittah, Qatziytz, Pomegranate, HamMetho'ar, and HanNe'ah).
- Note to P40**      **40a The fourth lot fell to Yissakar. . . :** In the description of the Yissakarites' land, there is little detail beyond a list of towns; it seems certain to me that the author had no real information about where their borders lay.
- Note to P41**      **41a twenty-two towns and their hamlets:** In this *parashah* I count as many as twenty-four towns. However, it is unclear which place names the author counts as towns, and it is possible that two of the names that appear to be towns to me were in fact not towns. It is also odd that the author doesn't mention the "Great Sea" as the western border, but instead list towns on the coast (Tziydon Rabbah and Tzor's Fortress). The author likely drew on some sort of source document for the descriptions of the tribal borders, but there is a good possibility that the author didn't understand the geography described by his sources, nor have a clear idea of where the place names in his sources were located. Some scenario such as this may explain the confused nature of many of the descriptions of the tribal borders.
- Notes to P42**      **42a Yehudah (the Yarden):** The mention of Yehudah here is clearly an error in the text, as Naphtaliy occupies territory in the far north. The addition of "(the Yarden)" is a scribe's attempt to correct the text. It is interesting to note that the scribe has left Yehudah in the text rather than deleting it—a sign of the great respect that the authors, editors, and copyists held for the work of their predecessors.
- 42b nineteen towns and their hamlets:** Only sixteen towns are listed.
- Notes to P43**      **43a The seventh lot fell to the Danites' tribe. . . :** The description of the Danites' territory is vague, including only a list of towns they occupied. The author may not have had a clear idea of the actual geography of Dan, or it may not have been apparent from his source document. See note 41a above.
- 43b The Danites went and fought. . . the name of their ancestor:** This sentence is very likely an addition to the text from the final compositional stage. Such stories are not present in any of the material from the first compositional stage about the allotment of the tribes' territories.



**43c** —: The Leningrad Codex has a *parashah petuhah* here.

**43,1a These are the allotted properties... apportioning out the land:** The final two sentences of this *parashah* are not part of the earliest version of Joshua, but represent an addition made by priests from Samaria (with the approval of their counterparts in Yerushalem). Note especially the mention of the Meeting Tent. This summary statement serves as a bookend to the Samaritan addition above in P35. See note 35a above.

**Note to P43,1**

**44a Speak to the Yisra'elites as follows...:** I assign the core of this *parashah* to Joshua's first compositional stage. As I discuss elsewhere, the authors of Joshua's first compositional stage present the events in the book as the fulfillment of Yahweh's promises and commands to the Yisra'elites that were given through Mosheh. This *parashah* thus serves as the fulfillment of the command in Deut P18,6 (which I date to Deuteronomy's earliest stage) to establish three towns of refuge in Kena'an and up to three other towns of refuge outside Kena'an "if your god Yahweh expands your territory."

**Notes to P44**

There is also material about the towns of refuge that appears in Num P92. However, I understand that *parashah* to be from Numbers' third compositional stage and date it to the fifth century BCE. I believe Num P92 was added to Numbers to accommodate the desire of the Samaritan priests to incorporate into the text ancient case law decisions related to cases of murder and manslaughter. For additional details on Num P92, see the discussion in note 92a in my translation of that book.

**44b some towns of refuge, which I promised to you through Mosheh:** An explicit reference to Deut P18,6.

**44c he must stand at the entrance to the town gate and plead his case in public to that town's elders:** The suspected murderer stands outside the town gate and pleads his case there. It's worth noting that most public business of walled towns in ancient Yisra'el and Yehudah—much of which was adjudicated by the town elders—was conducted in the open space or "plaza" (רחוב) just inside the town gate. Thus it would be convenient for the elders to hear the case of a suspect who is standing outside the gate. See, for example, Deut P20,3, which refers to the elders adjudicating a case at the town gate (that is, at the plaza inside the gate) and Gen P28,2, in which Shekem and Hemor address their fellow citizens at the town gate and propose a marriage alliance with the Ya'aqovssons.

**44d for he struck down his colleague without premeditation and hadn't previously acted in an adversarial way with him:** The author here is quoting Deut P18,6.

**44e He must remain in that town... the town from which he fled:** I understand these two sentences to be additions by the Samaritan authors of the third compositional stage, likely the same individuals responsible for the addition of the material about the towns of refuge to Numbers in Num P92. The ideas and concepts in these two sentences—the judgement by the community, the death of the high priest, and the right of return—are absent from the treatment of the towns of refuge in Deut P18,6, but are present in Num P92. A second indication that these two sentences are an addition and are not from the first compositional stage of Joshua is the presence of the

word עדה (“community”), which is characteristic of the authors from both Samaria and Yehud who I believe were active in the fifth century BCE.

**44f until his case comes before the community to be judged:** More literally, “until he stands in front of the community for judgement.”

**44g until the death of the high priest then in office:** The Hebrew is somewhat confused. It is probably best to understand the sentence as presenting the two conditions under which the “murderer” may leave the town of refuge: either if his case is judged by the community, or if the high priest dies. However, the disjunctive construction (אם ... אם) is absent from the Hebrew.

**44h Shekem in the Ephrayim mountains:** There some confusion in the text as to whether Shekem was in the territory allotted to Ephrayim or in the territory allotted to Menashsheh. Note that in the description of the territory of Menashsheh in P34, Shekem appears to be in Menashsheh (but relatively close to its southern border, which abuts Ephrayim). However in P47,3 and here in P44, Shekem is said to be in Ephrayim. In my view, this is most likely a reflection of the fact that there was no exact demarcation between the tribal territories (presuming the tribal territories reflect a historical reality). But regardless of to what extent the description of the territories represents fact or fiction, it is certainly true that the exact borders of the tribal territories were ill-defined in the authors’ minds.

**44i and Golan in the Bashan region from the tribe of Menashsheh:** This clause likely is original to the text, and may represent the only acknowledgement in the earliest version of the Deuteronomistic History of the Menashshehites occupying land east of the Yarden. As discussed elsewhere, in the material about the occupation of land east of the Yarden, the earliest version of the Deuteronomistic History spoke only of Re’uven and Gad. I believe all that material was edited in the Persian period at the insistence of the Samaritans, resulting in the numerous references throughout that material to “half of the tribe of Menashsheh.” That fact that the phrase “half of the tribe of Menashsheh” does not appear here in P44 makes me suspect that this reference to Menashsheh is original to the text.

**44j the towns designated:** The phrase that I have translated “the towns designated” (ערי המועדה) does not have the expected form based on the usual rules of ancient Hebrew grammar. (We expect the phrase not to be in construct and for the participle to be in the plural—הערים המועדות.) However, I do not believe that the text is in error; rather, I think this is a good example of the flexibility of Hebrew syntax, which—like all languages—does not consistently observe the grammatical rules that scholars have developed to explain the workings of the language. I believe that BDB, p. 418, is wrong to treat the word מועדה here as a noun—it is simply the *hoph’al* participle used in an informal grammatical construction.

**44k until his case comes before the community:** The grammatical awkwardness of this clause (it is something of a *non sequitur*), the presence of עדה (“community”), and the agreement with the material from Num P92 all suggest that this clause is an addition to the text, most likely made by the authors of the third compositional stage. See also note 44e above.

**45a The heads of the Lewites' families went to see El'azar the Priest. . .** I understand the material beginning here through P47,10, which treats the apportionment of forty-eight towns to the Lewites' three clans, to be an addition composed primarily by the Yehudean priests of the second compositional stage. That said, however, there are many indications throughout these *parashot* of contributions by the priests in Samaria, and we should accordingly presume the two priesthods collaborated closely on this material. Although it is often impossible to determine the specific contributions of each group with confidence, I believe the mention of Shiloh here in P45 is due to the Samaritan priests, who must have convinced their counterparts to allow the apportionment of the Lewites' towns to happen at Shiloh. (It is implicit in the text that this apportionment would have happened in front of the Meeting Tent.)

Notes to P45

As an aside, it is worth noting here the apparent compromise in the construction of Joshua. In the original version of the book, which was a purely southern composition, the apportionment of the land to all twelve tribes happens at Gilgal. There is no Meeting Tent in this version of the book and there is no mention of the allotment taking place "in front of Yahweh." But all the work on the book of Joshua in the Persian period down to approximately 400 BCE was, I believe, a collaborative effort between priests in Mount Gerizim and priests in Yerushalem. In the fifth century versions of Joshua, the priests in Yerushalem have allowed a change so that the apportionment of the land to the most important tribes (Yehudah and the Yosephites) still happens in Gilgal, but the apportionment to the remaining seven western tribes plus the apportionment of the Lewites' towns happens in Shiloh in front of Yahweh (i.e. in front of the Meeting Tent), as is clear from the language at the end of P35.

**45b Yahweh commanded through Mosheh that you give us towns to live in:** This sentence is an explicit reference to Num P91, which I believe was written by the same individuals as the authors of Josh P45 - P47,10. It is worth noting that Num P91 does not mention Yehoshua, but it is clear that Josh P45 is dependent on that *parashah*.

**45c \*\*:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.

**46a Thirteen towns from the tribe of Yehudah, from the Shim'onites tribe, and from the tribe of Binyamin:** During the fifth century BCE—when the material about the Lewites' towns was added to Joshua—Aharonide priests had assumed leadership of Yahweh's cults in both Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion. Thus, the fact that the first lot is for the Qehathites' clans (to which the Aharonides belonged), and that the lot grants them towns among the southern tribes indicates, in my opinion, that the priesthood at Mount Zion was more powerful than the priesthood at Mount Gerizim. On the Aharonides' leadership at both cult locations at this time, see [footnote 10](#) in my essay on Leviticus' composition history in my translation of that book.

Note to P46

**46,1a from half the tribe of Menashsheh:** This is the half of Menashsheh that occupied land west of the Yarden, in Kena'an.

Notes to P46,1

**46,1b the remaining Qehathites:** Among these priests would be those serving in the cult at Mount Gerizim. Based on the text here, they do not appear to have claimed Aharonide descent, despite the fact that the high priest at Mount Gerizim at the time likely was an Aharonide. Note that the towns here in P46,1 are located in the northern

heartland—Ephrayim, Menashsheh and Dan. (Mount Gerizim is located near the border between Menashsheh and Ephrayim, and close to Dan.) The specific towns given to “the remaining Qehathites” are listed in P47,3 - P47,4; and of course this list includes Shekem, which lies at the foot of Mount Gerizim.

**Note to P46,2** **46,2a the half of the tribe of Menashsheh living in the Bashan region:** It is noteworthy that the author omits any mention of Gil’ad here. As discussed in notes 26a, 27a, 27,1a, and 34b, there seems to have been some disagreement between the authors from Samaria and those from Yehud as to whether any of the Gil’ad region belonged to the western Menashshehites. The statement here in P46,2 is in keeping with the view of the authors from Yehud, who limited the western Menashshehites to the Bashan region.

**Notes to P46,3** **46,3a were given over to the Merarites:** Based on the parallel constructions in the preceding *parashot*, it is likely the phrase “by lot” (בְּזֶרֶק) has fallen out of the text here.

**46,3b —:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break here.

**Note to P46,4** **46,4a exactly as Yahweh had commanded through Mosheh:** Another reference to Num P91.

**Notes to P47** **47a Those given to the Aharonides...** I believe all the material beginning here to the end of the *parashah* is an addition from the fifth compositional stage, with the text translated in italics being glosses from later editions in the stage. The authors of the fifth stage have inserted this material here in front of P47,1 to address the obvious tension in the traditions about Hevron being given to Kaleb and his family (see P29, which belongs to the first compositional stage), and Hevron’s status as a town designated for the Lewites in P47,1 (which dates to the second stage).

**47b the Anaqis:** This is a variant spelling of the name of the people called the Anaqis elsewhere in Joshua. See P23,2, P29, and P30.

**Notes to P47,1** **47,1a the town designated as a refuge for those accused of murder:** It is interesting to note that the three Lewite clans are each granted two towns of refuge. The Qehathites receive Hevron (P47,1) and Shekem (P47,3); the Gershunnites receive Golan (P47,5) and Qedesh (P47,8); and the Merarites receive Ramoth (P47,10) and Betzer. The list of towns given to the Merarites by the Re’uvenites has fallen out of the text, but we know Betzer was one of them from P44, which lists the six towns of refuge.

**47,1b Spring:** This most likely is the town mentioned as being allotted to the Shim’onites in P38. It is also possible, but less likely, that it is an abbreviation of either Spring Gardens (עֵין גַּיִם) or Kid Spring (עֵין נָדִי), both of which appear in the list of Yehudah’s towns. See P31,1 and P32.

**47,1c —:** The Leningrad Codex has a *parashah* *petuhah* here.

**Notes to P47,3** **47,3a With respect to the Lewites’ Qehathite clans (that is, the remaining Qehathites):** It bears repeating that these are the non-Aharonide Qehathites (see note 46,1b above). It is this clan of Qehathites who must have served in Yahweh’s priesthood at Mount Gerizim, and who I believe were the authors of Joshua’s third compo-

sitional stage. I believe it is also these individuals who were responsible for collecting and combining in a single document all the ancient material that became the book of Leviticus. For my views on Leviticus' composition history, see the [essay](#) on that topic in my translation of Leviticus.

**47,3b Shekem:** As a reminder to readers, Shekem lies at the foot of Mount Gerizim. It is presented here in Joshua as a town given to the Lewites, and it is fair to assume that this is where the families of the priests serving in the cult at Mount Gerizim lived.

**47,4a four towns:** In the Leningrad Codex, there is a *parashah setumah* following the phrase "four towns."

**Notes to P47,4**

**47,4b Pomegranate Press:** This is a different town than the Pomegranate Press (or Gath Rimmon) in the territory of the tribe of Dan listed in the preceding sentence.

**47,10a The total number of towns belonging to the Merarites... twelve towns:** Only eight towns (four from Gad and four from Zevulun) are listed as being given to the Merarites. A full sentence listing the four towns from Re'uben that were also given to the Merarites has fallen out of the text in either P47,9 or here in P47,10. See P46,3 which states that the Merarites received twelve towns from the tribes of Re'uben, Gad, and Zevulun.

**Note to P47,10**

From P44, we know that Betzer, which was a town of refuge, was one of the four towns given by the Re'ubenites to the Merarites' clans.

**47,11a And so Yahweh gave Yisra'el all the land that he promised to give their ancestors...:** This brief *parashah* reads as a summary composed as the conclusion to the division of the land, and provides a nice parallel with the material at the end of P23,1 that serves as the conclusion to the conquest narrative. Both conclusions were likely written by the lead editors of the Deuteronomistic History and not by the principal authors of the first stage of Joshua. The *parashah* here (P47,11) emphasizes a major theme of Joshua, reminding the reader that all the action in the book—both the conquest narrative and the narrative about the division of the land—represents the fulfillment of promises made to the ancestors, as related specifically in the book of Deuteronomy. This *parashah* nicely sets up Yehoshua's farewell speech in P53, which was the original conclusion to the book of Joshua, and which would have followed directly after the next *parashah* (P48) in the original version of the book.

**Notes to P47,11**

The opening sentence of the *parashah* mentions Yahweh's promise to give land to the Yisra'elites' ancestors. This promise is first given in Exodus [P4,1](#) (near what I believe was the original beginning of the Deuteronomistic History), when Yahweh appeared to Mosheh in the form of a burning bush. In that *parashah* Yahweh tells Mosheh to relay a message to Yisra'el's elders that he will bring them up out of their misery in Egypt to the land of the Kena'anites. It is this promise in Exodus P4,1 that the author of Josh P47,11 refers to. The gift of land promised to the ancestors is a key theme in the first half of the Deuteronomistic History, and references to this promise appear numerous times in the early layers of Numbers and Deuteronomy. Specific mentions of it in the early material from these books can be found in in Num [P48](#) ("the land that you promised their ancestors"), Num [P54](#) ("the land that I promised their ancestors"), Deut [P6,1](#) ("the land that he promised your ancestors"), Deut [P18,6](#)

("the entire land that he said he would give your ancestors"), Deut P25 ("the land that your god Yahweh promised your ancestors he would give to you"), Deut P29,1 ("the land which Yahweh promised their ancestors he would give to them"), and Deut P30 ("the land that I promised their ancestors"). The mention of the promise to the ancestors is made eleven additional times in Deuteronomy and twice in Exodus, but I believe all these mentions belong to Persian period additions.

**47,11b Yahweh gave them respite from all those surrounding them, just as he had promised their ancestors:** An explicit reference to Mosheh's speech in Deut P12,5, where he tells the Yisra'elites that Yahweh will give them respite from their enemies when they reside in the land that he will give them. The statement here in Jos P47,11 uses language almost identical to that in Deut P12,5.

**47,11c of all the good things that Yahweh had promised the nation of Yisra'el:** A reference to the body of promises in Deuteronomy and, more specifically, to the blessings in Deut P25 that Yahweh promises to bestow on the Yisra'elites in return for their fulfilling the obligations of their treaty with him.

**47,11d all of it came true:** One of the central themes of the earliest version of Joshua (to which P47,11 belongs) is that the events of the book represent the fulfillment of all the things that Yahweh promised "the nation of Yisra'el." This *parashah* serves as a sort of summary statement for that theme. It bears repeating that these are the promises made in the book of Deuteronomy, and not the promises made in the book of Genesis. The authors of the earliest version of the Deuteronomistic History, who were from Yehudah, do not refer to the Samaritan book of Genesis, and if they were aware of the book's existence, they would not have viewed it as authoritative.

#### Notes to P48

**48a and half of the tribe of Menashsheh:** I believe this phrase was most likely added to the text by the authors of the third compositional stage and not the fifth stage. However, it should be noted that if it was added by the authors of the fifth stage (who often made such harmonizing additions), then it is easier to understand why the authors of the third stage might have wished to add P49, which records a separate farewell from Yehoshua to the eastern Menashshehites. But see my comments to P49 below.

**48b You have followed everything that Mosheh Yahwehsservant commanded you:** A reference to Mosheh's commands to the Re'ubenites, Gadites, and half of the tribe of Menashsheh in Num P87. (This command is repeated at the end of Deut P1,4, which the authors of this *parashah* would have known as well.) It's also worth noting the use of the honorific surname Yahwehsservant, which the authors know would make their readers recall the conclusion of Deuteronomy in Deut P35,7, where this surname is bestowed upon Mosheh.

**48c you've obeyed me in everything that I have commanded you:** A reference to Yehoshua's speech to the Re'ubenites, Gadites, and half of the tribe of Menashsheh in P3, when he tells them they must cross the Yarden and support their kinsmen in the battles to take possession of Kena'an.

**48d the service imposed by your god Yahweh's commandment:** It is possible that this statement is another reference to the requirement that the eastern tribes assist the western tribes in the conquest of the land, which is given in Num P87 and Deut P1,4. However, I do not think that likely, as in those speeches Mosheh does not tell the eastern tribes that the command is from Yahweh. I think it more likely the clause here refers to the command in Deut P19,4 to make a ban devotion of all peoples and towns in the lands that Yahweh gives to the Yisra'elites. That is to say, the Re'uvinites, Gadites, and half of the tribe of Menashsheh have faithfully carried out the ban devotion against the native peoples during their campaigns in Kena'an.

**48e your god Yahweh has given respite to your kinsmen, just as he promised them:** A reference to the promise given in Deut P12,5. See note 47,11b above.

**48f that land that you took possession of, which Mosheh Yahwehsservant gave you:** An allusion to the story in Num P86 - P87.

**48g However, you must be very careful to carry out the commandment... with your entire being:** A reference to Deut P6 (the Shema) and possibly also to Deut P28,3, which sums up the requirements of Deuteronomy in terms similar to those of the Shema. I view both Deut P6 and P28,3 as Persian period additions to Deuteronomy, and for that reason, I understand this sentence here in Joshua to be an addition from the book's final compositional stage.

**48h Yehoshua then warmly bid them farewell:** The author here uses the verb בָּרַךְ, which is almost always translated as "bless." However, it is very frequently used in the context of greeting someone when meeting them or to bid them farewell when parting. BDB, p. 139, def. 4 briefly discusses this usage. The verb is used to indicate a more meaningful greeting or send-off than שָׁלוֹם, which has a connotation in these situations that is closer to "hello" and "goodbye."

**48i \*\*:** The Leningrad Codex has a *parashah setumah* here.

**49a Mosheh gave land in the Bashan to half of the tribe of Menashsheh:** I understand this entire *parashah* to be an addition from the Samaritan authors of the third compositional stage, who were responsible for inserting references to half of the tribe of Menashsheh in all the traditions in Numbers and Joshua relating to the occupation of land east of the Yarden. They likely inserted P49 to remind the reader that the Menashshehites living east of the Yarden did in fact receive their land from Mosheh, and thus they should be included as part of Yahweh's people.

Notes to P49

**49b Go back to your tents with great riches...:** Recall that at the beginning of P14 Yahweh modifies the requirements of the ban devotion to allow the Yisra'elites "to take plunder and livestock" from the towns they defeat.

**49c with extraordinary numbers of livestock, with silver and gold:** The language recalls the descriptions of the patriarchs' wealth in Genesis. Note, for example, the description of Avram's wealth in Gen P17: "Now Avram was very wealthy in livestock, silver, and gold." One wonders if the Samaritan author of P49 was intentionally alluding here to the blessings of wealth that Yahweh bestowed upon Avraham and



his descendants, to demonstrate to the reader that the eastern Menashshehites (who are among Avraham's descendants) received such blessings too.

**49d Divide the spoils from your enemies with your kinsmen:** That is, when you return home, be sure to share the spoils taken from the slaughter of the Kena'anite towns with the other members of your tribes who stayed behind (that is, with your family members and with the men who are not of fighting age). It's worth noting that the principle of sharing spoils with those who stay behind is also the subject of a story about Dawiyd in the book of Samuel; see the end of Sam P62.

#### Notes to P50

##### **50a The Re'uenites and the Gadites and half of the tribe of Menashsheh...**

I ascribe the story of the altar in P50 - P52 to the fourth compositional stage, the authors of which I associate with Aharonide priests at Mount Zion and and their Aharonide counterparts at Mount Gerizim. I date this stage to the first half of the fourth century BCE. (I believe these individuals were also responsible for what I call the fifth compositional stage of Numbers, the late material in what I call the fourth compositional stage of Exodus, and the material in the third compositional stage of Leviticus.) Apart from a brief addition at the end of P57, these *parashot* comprise the only material in Joshua that I date to this compositional stage. My hypothesis is that sometime early in the fourth century, the Samaritans convinced their counterparts in Yehud to include the Samaritan book of Leviticus in the books of the Torah, and to separate the book of Joshua from those books. This, I believe, explains why there is so little material in Joshua from this stage of the book.

While I view P50 - P52 as a collaboration between the two groups of Aharonide priests, there are some indications that the Samaritans played a larger part in shaping these *parashot*. The two main signs of Samaritan influence are the initial setting at Shiloh and the idea that the lands outside Kena'an—including territories inhabited by Yisra'elite tribes—are "unclean" (an idea that, as I argue in my book on Leviticus, reflects the unique theology of the land developed at Mount Gerizim).

In the original version of this story, the "crime" of the altar seems only to have been committed by the Re'uenites and Gadites. In my opinion, this is one instance in which the Samaritans did not want the Menashshehites east of the Yarden included in the stories about the Re'uenites and Gadites. I explain the numerous mentions of "half of the tribe of Menashsheh" in P50 - P52 as additions by the authors of the fifth stage, who inserted them to harmonize this story with the other stories about the Re'uenites and Gadites, in which the eastern Menashshehites were always included.

**50b departing from Shiloh:** The use of Shiloh for the setting rather than Gilgal is a strong indication of Samaritan authorship, in my opinion. The Shiloh setting also makes sense from a narrative perspective, as this is where the division of land for the last seven tribes took place. (Recall that the Samaritan addition in P35 shifted the division of the land from Gilgal to Shiloh.)

**50c to go to the Gil'ad region:** The omission of any mention of Bashan is noteworthy, as it lends support to the proposal that the earliest version of P50 - P52 concerned only the Re'uenites and Gadites. If the Samaritans were the lead authors of these *parashot* and if they had included the Menashshehites in this story, they almost certainly would have mentioned Bashan here alongside Gil'ad.



**50d the Yisra'elites received the news:** It is interesting to note that the authors of P50 - P52 throughout their story seem to make a distinction between the Yisra'elites and the tribes living east of the Yarden, as though those tribes are not considered fully Yisra'elite because they do not live in Kena'an. This might reflect their theology of the land, which views the lands outside Kena'an as "impure" (see my comments on this topic below in note 51i).

**50e at the eastern edge of:** Translation of **אל מול** ("towards the front of"). In Hebrew geography, the "front" side is the eastern side. It is important to note that the authors conceive of the altar as west of the Yarden river, not east of it. On the significance of the altar's location, see note 51i below.

**50f right next to:** The prepositional phrase **אל עבר** ("to the side of") is typically used to mean "in front of," which is how I understand its use here. Specifically, "in front of" means to the east of. I have translated into idiomatic English.

**51a Piynehas El'azarsson the Priest:** As a reminder to the reader, this is the same Piynehas who averted Yahweh's anger against the Yisra'elites in the "Pe'or affair" described in Num **P74** (from that book's fifth compositional stage, the authors of which were also responsible for the material here in Josh P50 - P52). One of the purposes of the story in Num P74 is to explain why the priesthood is reserved for Piynehas and his descendants alone, and other Aharonides excluded. See note **74c** of my translation of Numbers.

**Notes to P51**

It is interesting to note that in Joshua and Numbers, the mentions of Piynehas are entirely positive, as are the mentions of Shiloh in Joshua. I view all this material as heavily influenced by, if not primarily written by, authors from Samaria. This is in sharp contrast to the book of Samuel. This book, which was written by authors from Yehudah/Yehud, presents Shiloh as a site of abominable cult practices and characterizes the priesthood there (including a priest named Piynehas) as corrupt and as defiling the Meeting Tent with abhorrent sexual practices. See Sam **P2,1 - P3**.

As an aside, while references to Piynehas in the Tanakh suggest that the name was common in both the northern and southern cults, there is also archaeological evidence connecting it to the Samaritan cult: the name appears on five Hellenistic-era votive and dedicatory inscriptions found at the recent excavations at Mount Gerizim. See the fascinating discussion of the onomastic evidence from the Mount Gerizim inscriptions in G. Knoppers, "**Aspects of Samaria's Religious Culture During the Early Hellenistic Period**" in P. Davies and D. Edelman (eds.), *The Historian and the Bible: Essays in Honor of Lester L. Grabbe* (London: T & T Clark, 2010), pp. 159-174.

**51b with him were ten chieftains:** The mention of ten chieftains is a further indication that in the original version of the story in P50 - P52 there were only two tribes accused of building the altar.

**51c military divisions:** For this use of the term "thousand" (**אלף**), see note **1f** in my translation of Numbers.

**51d What is this damnable treachery that you’ve committed:** The exceptional harshness of the language is striking. In ancient Hebrew, the demonstrative particle הַ ("this") was often used to express contempt, which is how it is used here. I reflect this in my translation with the word "damnable."

It should be noted that the specific crime that Piynehas accuses the Re’uvenites and Gadites of is the construction of an altar for offerings in a place that was not "chosen" by Yahweh. For the priests at both Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim, the only legitimate altar for presenting offerings to Yahweh is at "the place that Yahweh chose [will choose]," as expressed most clearly in Deut P12,5. Indeed, the best way to understand the story in P50 - P52 is as an examination of the implications of the requirement expressed in Deut P12,5 that there be only one altar for presenting offerings to Yahweh. Despite the close working partnership between the Samaritan and Yehudean priesthoods, we can be confident that there must have been some underlying tension between the two groups because of their different views about which place Yahweh had in fact chosen as his sole legitimate altar.

**51e Pe’or’s crime:** A reference to the story in Num P73 - P74, in which Yahweh orders the slaughter of all Yisra’elites who participated in rites acknowledging the local Mo’avite gods. It is appropriate that Piynehas cites Pe’or’s crime in his speech, as it was Piynehas’ own actions in Num P73 that averted Yahweh’s anger and prevented the slaughter from "finishing off the Yisra’elites."

**51f which we haven’t cleansed ourselves of yet even now:** The mention of cultic purity here supports the proposal for a late date of this story in P50 - P52. See my comments in note 51i below. It is unclear to me what Piynehas is alluding to when he says the Yisra’elites haven’t cleansed themselves of the crime of Pe’or. It is conceivable—though I think improbable—that Piynehas here is referring to the events of Num P85,1, which describe the aftermath of the Yisra’elites’ taking vengeance on the Midyanites for the "Pe’or affair." Possibly the author of Josh P51 was aware of a tradition (no longer preserved) of Yisra’elites not obeying Mosheh’s command in Num P85,1 to kill the Midyanite women they captured. The alternative is to assume that the author has made Piynehas refer to the lasting pollution of the crime of Pe’or as a way to heighten the emotional impact of his speech. On this phenomenon, see the comments in note 51g directly below. For other examples of this phenomenon in Joshua, see notes 11,2a and 29i above.

**51g and the resulting plague:** In Numbers, there is no plague that resulted from the Pe’or affair. Given that I believe the same individuals were the authors of Num P73 - P74 and Josh P50 - P52, I presume the reference to a plague here is simply a literary device on the part of the author. Ancient Hebrew authors in their writing often prioritized emotional impact over logical consistency. Thus it was common for them to introduce features into their stories that heightened the emotional impact of their writing, despite these new features creating inconsistencies in the narrative. We see this especially in the stories of Genesis, and I believe the same dynamic explains the reference to "the resulting plague" here in Josh P51.

**51h you yourselves are going to turn away from Yahweh and make it worse:** I have added the phrase “and make it worse” in order to show the logical connection with the preceding sentence. The two sentences are closely connected in the Hebrew—the flow of the Hebrew is, “Was Pe’or’s crime insufficient [i.e. not bad enough] for us... that now you [want to] turn away from Yahweh?” It is difficult to reflect this logic in English without adding words not present in the Hebrew. The idiom that the author uses—המעתה (“is it insufficient that”)—is found only in emotionally-charged passages in which the speaker is criticizing the person or persons being addressed.

It is important to note that for Piynehas, the crime of the eastern tribes is not worship of other gods, but rather building an unapproved altar. (And there is only one approved altar—the altar in front of Yahweh’s shrine.)

**51i if the land in your possession is impure:** This language is dependent on the concepts introduced in the fourth compositional stage of Leviticus and indicates that the *parashot* about the altar built by the Re’uvenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Menashsheh (P50 - P52) is quite late, dating to the latter decades of the Persian period. This is consistent with my view expressed above that the story of the altar was composed as part of Joshua’s fourth compositional stage, which I assign to the first half of the fourth century BCE.

For the authors of the fourth compositional stage of Leviticus (whom I associate with priests in Yahweh’s cult at Mount Gerizim), the precincts of Yahweh’s shrine extend to the borders of Kena’an, and so the land and everything in it must always be in a state of ritual purity. By contrast, all things and people outside the land are impure. Piynehas in his speech tells the eastern tribes that if the land in their possession is unclean (and he believes in fact that it is), then they should relocate to the other side of the Yarden and take possession of land in Kena’an.

If the authors of P50 - P52 believed that the land outside Kena’an was unclean, then this may explain why they had the Re’uvenites and Gadites locate their altar in Kena’an proper, west of the Yarden, even though they themselves lived east of the river. (Recall that in P50, the authors say the Re’uvenites, the Gadites, and half of the tribe of Menashsheh built an altar beside the Yarden “in the districts around the Yarden which were in Kena’an,” and then towards the end of the *parashah*, they repeat that the altar was “at the eastern edge of Kena’an.”)

**51j where Yahweh’s shrine resides:** A reference to the Meeting Tent. It is likely, in my opinion, that the authors from Yehud insisted on the use of neutral terminology here—Yahweh’s “shrine” (משכן)—rather than the Meeting Tent terminology favored by the Samaritans. It is worth noting how the ideas in this sentence assume the worldview of the authors of the fourth stage of Leviticus. Piynehas is saying, “if the land where you live is unclean [i.e. ritually impure], leave that land and live here in the land that Yahweh possesses [i.e. Kena’an], where his shrine resides [and which as a result is in a permanent state of ritual purity].” The shrine confers ritual purity on the entire land, so if the problem is you live in an unclean land, move here to where the shrine is located. The presence of such a worldview here in P51 is another indication, in my opinion, of the late date of the story of the altar in P50 - P52.

**51k our god Yahweh's altar:** The phrasing is striking. Recall that at this point in the broader narrative of Joshua, the only altar to Yahweh is the one that Yehoshua built on Mount Gerizim in P16 (the location of the altar was changed to Mount Eyal in the second or first century BCE). However, I do not think the authors of the fourth compositional stage had the broader narrative in Joshua in mind when mentioning "Yahweh's altar" here in P51 or, more generally, in writing P50 - P52 in its entirety. Rather, I believe it is clear that they were thinking of their own present-day situation in composing this material. (The mention of Yahweh's altar in P51,1 supports this view; see note 51,1j below.) Of course, there is no way to know the exact circumstances behind the composition of the story of the altar. If one were to speculate, perhaps the priesthoods at Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion wrote the story in P50 - P52 to address what they saw as a threat from altars at alternative cult locations, either inside or outside the provinces of Samaria and Yehud. The temple to Yhw at Elephantine in Upper Egypt, for example, was destroyed in 410 BCE—perhaps just one or two decades before the composition of P50 - P52—and we know the Yahwist community at Elephantine sought to rebuild their temple. While there is no evidence that the cult of Yhw knew specifically of the books of the Torah, they were in regular communication with officials in Samaria and Yehud, and it is conceivable that this story in P50 - P52 was written against the background of the not-too-distant events in Elephantine, as a way to reaffirm the centrality of the message of Deuteronomy and to reject as illegitimate any altar for offerings to Yahweh apart from the one located "in the place that he chose [will choose]."

While I believe priests at Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion worked together on the composition of P50 - P52 to address a common threat, it is also possible to see some underlying tension between the two groups in the language about "our god Yahweh's altar," which undoubtedly reflects phrasing negotiated between the two groups. It bears repeating that for both the priests at Mount Gerizim and the priests at Mount Zion, there can only be one legitimate altar, as Yahweh had ordained through Mosheh in Deut P12,5. It also bears repeating that the two groups had different views about where that altar was located. Although the partnership between the two groups endured for more than three centuries and on the whole must have been relatively close, in certain respects—such as texts that touch on the topic of Yahweh's altar—it must have been a very uneasy partnership.

**51l Didn't Akan Zerahsson commit treachery by not honoring the ban devotion?:** A reference to the story in P13,1 - P13,2.

**51m He didn't die because of his crime:** The Hebrew is confused and the text is likely corrupt. The author of P13,2 is unequivocal that Akan did die because of his crime. The text would make sense if it read, "Yahweh's anger was directed at the entire community of Yisra'el—it wasn't only a single man who died because of his crime." But that reading would require significant emendation, including the rearrangement of words and the insertion of the relative particle אשר.

**51n —:** The Leningrad Codex has a *parashah petuhah* here.

**51,1a Yahweh is the greatest god! Yahweh is the greatest god!:** This entire *parashah* is the response of the Re'ubenites and Gadites (and, as edited by the authors of the fifth compositional stage, half the tribe of Menashsheh) to the accusation that they've committed treachery against Yahweh. The author has written the *parashah* in a highly emotional style that in certain places omits words and phrases where we expect them and that doesn't closely observe the usual Hebrew grammatical conventions.

**51,1b the heads of Yisra'el's military divisions:** In the **Aleppo Codex**, there is a blank space at the beginning of the line that starts with the phrase "Yisra'el's military divisions." The blank space, which appears to be due to an erasure, makes the line look as though it begins with a *parashah setumah*. Because it is clear that no *parashah* break was meant, I do not indicate a *parashah* here. It should be noted that in the Leningrad Codex, there is no *parashah* break at this point in the text.

**51,1c If we've rebelled or acted with treachery against Yahweh:** In Hebrew this clause lacks a subject and verb—an example of the author's emotional style mentioned in note 51,1a. In my translation, I have added the implied subject, recast the noun "rebellion" (מִרְדָּה) as a verb, and added the verb "acted" in order to preserve the emotional impact of the language. The elliptical style here is a literary device to indicate the great emotions felt by the speakers; a functionally equivalent English translation should thus be written to reflect that emotion rather than providing a word for word correspondence in imitation of the elliptical style of the source text.

**51,1d But if we've built ourselves an altar...:** In Hebrew, this sentence, like the preceding one, is written in an elliptical style in order to indicate the great emotions of the speakers' response. The force of the conditional particle אם ("if") in the preceding sentence carries over to this one. It is important to point out here that the act of treachery described by the Re'ubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Menashsheh is the violation of one of the central tenets of Deuteronomy, which is to make offerings only "in the place that Yahweh chooses" (Deut P12,5). They are saying, "If we've built this altar and made offerings on it, then let Yahweh punish us." Their point is that it is no crime to build an altar so long as it isn't used for offerings and serves some other purpose.

**51,1e then let Yahweh himself exact punishment!:** With this statement the Re'ubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Menashsheh are criticizing the actions of Piynahas and the heads of Yisra'el's military divisions. In effect, they are saying "if we've done anything wrong, then let Yahweh be the one to punish us, not you."

**51,1f welfare offerings:** The usual term for welfare offering is זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים, but it is often abbreviated simply as זֶבַח, as here. This abbreviation is not usually recognized in translations; BDB, p. 257, def. 5, acknowledges the use of זֶבַח as an abbreviation for welfare offering, but incorrectly states that the use of the abbreviation is "rare." In many places in the Tanakh, authors speak of whole offerings and welfare offerings together, and thus the mention of whole offerings here is a clear indication that we should understand זֶבַח to function as an abbreviation for welfare offerings and not as a general term for all animal offerings. For a brief discussion of this abbreviation, see note 35d in my translation of Leviticus.

**51,1g perform the service owed to Yahweh in front of him:** The phrase “in front of him” is a specific reference to the shrine where Yahweh is somehow present. At this point in the narrative of Joshua, the shrine is located in Shiloh. However, this speech also looks to the future (that is, the time of the authors of this *parashah*), and the authors certainly would have had in mind the location of the shrine in their own day where they believed Yahweh was present. For the Samaritan priests who I believe were the primary authors of this *parashah*, this is the shrine on Mount Gerizim, and for the Yehudeans who contributed to and approved the content in the *parashah*, it is the temple on Mount Zion.

As an aside, it is noteworthy that there is no compelling evidence that there was a true temple at Gerizim. My own view is that it is highly likely the structure was a temporary one similar to the portable shrine described in Exodus. It is important to note that while Mount Gerizim has been the subject of a number of excavations, and while extensive evidence of a cult to Yahweh has been found at the site, there are no material remains of an actual Persian-period temple building that have been found there to date. In this regard, it is also worth mentioning that Samaritan tradition holds there never was a temple on Mount Gerizim, but only a sanctuary modeled after the treaty shrine described in Exodus. For a good recent summary of the archaeological evidence, see R. Pummer, “Was There an Altar or a Temple in the Sacred Precinct on Mt. Gerizim?” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 47 (2016), 1-21. See also the interesting discussions in A. de Hemmer Gudme, “Was the Temple on Mount Gerizim Modelled after the Jerusalem Temple?” *Religions* 2020, 11(2), 73 and in E. Nodet, “Samaritans, Samaritans, Temples, Jews,” in J. Zsengellér (ed.), *Samaria, Samaritans, Samaritans: Studies on Bible, History and Linguistics* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2013), pp. 121-172. And see A. Faust, “Israelite Temples: Where was Israelite Cult Not Practiced, and Why,” *Religions* 2019, 10, 106, which argues that there is no firm evidence of a permanent structure serving as a temple or shrine at any Yahwistic cult sites in the north during the period of the monarchy.

**51,1h Look closely at the form of Yahweh’s altar that our ancestors made—it’s not for whole offerings or welfare offerings:** That is, the design of the altar does not conform to the altar law in Exodus P35,1, which states that the altar on which offerings are made must be built with unhewn stones. The point that the Re’uvenites and Gadites are making is that the altar is not intended to be an altar on which one presents offerings to Yahweh—it is merely a symbol of the Re’uvenites’ and Gadites’ commitment to performing service to Yahweh.

**51,1i May we be damned if we’ve done this:** The syntax of the Hebrew is a little unusual, and likely reflects the author’s attempt to portray emotional speech. The phrase חלילה לנו (“may we be damned”) is often followed by the preposition “from” (מן) plus the infinitive, with the meaning “may we be damned if we do such and such.” Here, however, the author replaces the infinitive with the third person pronominal suffix. The literal meaning of the Hebrew is something like, “May we be damned if it [is true]: if we’ve rebelled...”

It’s worth noting here how the conclusion of the speech of the Re’uvenites and Gadites reinforces the central tenet of Deuteronomy—they say they would never make an offering on any altar except on the one in front of his shrine (that is, on the

one that is in the place he has chosen/will choose).

**51,1j the altar of our god Yahweh which is in front of his shrine:** At this point in the narrative, Yahweh's shrine is in Shiloh. The only altar mentioned in Joshua is the one on Mount Gerizim. The fact that the authors never state there was an altar in Shiloh and instead conflate the altar on Mount Gerizim with the shrine in Shiloh demonstrates clearly, in my opinion, that they are not thinking of the larger narrative of Joshua, but are writing specifically to address issues of their own day. On this topic, and on the exceptional phrasing "the altar of our god Yahweh," see note 51k above.

As an aside, it is worth noting here the use of the term "shrine" (משכן) rather than "Meeting Tent" (אהל מועד). As I have discussed elsewhere, the Meeting Tent is the term favored by the Samaritans, and it is possible to detect a great deal of sensitivity to the use of that term in Joshua and in all books of the Torah (with the exception of Leviticus, which I have argued was primarily a Samaritan composition). I think it very likely that the language we see here in P51,1 was closely negotiated between the two groups of priests, with the phrase "which is in front of his shrine" being agreed as a compromise.

**52a you've saved the Yisra'elites from Yahweh's punishment:** That is, they have averted Yahweh's punishing the Yisra'elites living in Kena'an for their unjustified attack on their kinsmen living east of the Yarden, and they have prevented a similar situation from ever happening in the future.

Notes to P52

**52b Piynahas El'azarsson the Priest and the leaders:** Note that there is no mention of the heads of Yisra'el's military divisions. While it is usual in ancient Hebrew narrative for authors to account for all the characters they have introduced, this is not done consistently, as the ancient authors' attitude toward narrative logic was looser and more flexible than how modern-day authors treat the logic of their narratives. It is unclear to me whether the heads of the military divisions have been omitted here because of the original authors' loose attitude toward narrative logic, or if in fact they are missing from the text because of a later copyist's error.

**52c the Re'uenites and Gadites:** Note that the eastern Menashshehites are absent here and in the remainder of the *parashah*. See note 50a above for my view that P50 - P52 were originally about only the Re'uenites and the Gadites.

**52d they no longer thought about going to war:** The syntax is somewhat unusual. The verb אמר ("say") often has the meaning "think" when there is no indication of a person to whom the speech is directed. The verb אמר with the infinitive means "promise" ("say to do a thing") when there is an audience (see BDB, p. 56, def. 3). However, when there is no audience (as here), it means "intend" ("think to do a thing"). The reader might expect to see the adverb עוד ("still, yet, again") used here, but it is not required. Strictly speaking, the meaning of the Hebrew is something like, "they no longer intended to go to war." I have translated into colloquial English, as I understand the phrasing of the Hebrew to be relatively informal.

**52e gave the altar the name ' ':** I believe that the name of the altar has fallen out of the text, and I thus show a blank space where the name should be. It is possible

to read the name as “Indeed, it serves as a witness between us, for Yahweh is the supreme god,” but I think it more plausible that the name has fallen from the text. In my view, the name likely was some variant of the name Gil’ad, which is the region inhabited by the Re’uvenites and Gadites. Gil’ad can be understood in Hebrew to mean something like “witness mound,” a concept which fits the description and use of the altar described in P50 - P52. (It’s worth noting here the parallel with the mound of stones signifying the reconciliation of Lavan and Ya’aqov at the end of Gen P27,3, which Ya’aqov names Gal’ed, or “witness mound.”)

**52f for they thought:** In ancient Hebrew narrative, it is common for authors to explain the origin of a name by specifying what the person bestowing the name “says” or “thinks” when giving the name. I have added the phrase “they thought” in translation to reflect this. This format of a person naming a child or a place followed by the rationale for the name frequently occurs in Genesis. See, for example, Gen P9,1 (Seth’s name), Gen P9,10 (Noah’s name), Gen P18,2 (the well named Hay Ro’iy’s Well), Gen P27,3 (the names Le’ah gave her sons and Rahel’s naming of Yoseph), and Gen P37 (the names Yoseph gave to his two sons).

**52g it serves as a witness between us:** As P51,1 clear states, the altar “witnesses” (or “testifies”) to the western tribes that the Re’uvenites’ and Gadites are committed to performing any and all service they owe to Yahweh “in front of him”—that is, they have bound themselves to present all their offerings to him in Kena’an on his sole legitimate altar in front of his shrine/temple. They won’t present any offerings to Yahweh in the place where they live. On the meaning of the phrase “in front of him,” see note 51,1g above.

**52h Indeed, Yahweh is the supreme god:** It is equally possible to understand this sentence as a clause connected to the previous sentence, in which the translation would be “it serves as a witness between us that Yahweh is the supreme god.” I believe my translation, however, is preferable, as the story makes clear that the altar is a witness of the Re’uvenites’ and Gadites’ commitment to performing service owed to Yahweh—it is not a witness to Yahweh’s greatness.

## Notes to P53

**53a A long time after Yahweh had given respite...:** This *parashah* represents the original conclusion to the book of Joshua. In the earliest version, the book began with a speech from Yahweh to Yehoshua preparing him for the conquest of the land, and the book ended with Yehoshua’s farewell speech to the Yisra’elites. In both speeches, the authors stressed themes that are central to the Deuteronomistic History as a whole. As discussed above in note 1a, I understand both the original opening and closing *parashot* to have been composed by the “lead editor(s)” of the Deuteronomistic History.

From a thematic perspective, the authors of P53 emphasize the importance of adhering to the terms of Yahweh’s treaty with the Yisra’elites, as recorded in the book of Deuteronomy (“you must remain very firm in observing and doing everything written in Mosheh’s Torah scroll so as not to depart from it in any way at all...”). And the most important treaty obligation is to acknowledge and give service to no gods apart from Yahweh (“...that you not call on their gods’ names, neither swearing by them, nor doing service to them, nor worshipping them.”) Yehoshua’s speech



concludes by reminding the Yisra'elites of the treaty blessings and curses in the book of Deuteronomy—the blessings that have come true during the Yisra'elites' conquest and occupation of the land because they “stayed close” to Yahweh, and the curses that Yahweh will bring down on his people if in the future they “violate the terms of the treaty” and “do service to other gods.” The lead editor(s) of Joshua thus use the conclusion to Yehoshua's speech to provide the reader with a framework to understand the events narrated in the following books of the Deuteronomistic History. The editors of the Deuteronomistic History viewed the events of their history through the lens of Deuteronomy's treaty blessings and curses, and they wished their readers to do the same. When Yahweh's people adhered to the treaty obligations, Yahweh bestowed blessings on them, and they enjoyed success and prosperity. But when they didn't adhere to those obligations—and, in particular, when they abandoned Yahweh for other gods—then Yahweh inflicted the treaty curses on them, ultimately causing them to lose possession of the “bountiful land” that he had given them.

**53b judges:** The word translated here as “judge” (שֹׁפֵט) is used with a variety of meanings in ancient Hebrew. Here in P53, it carries the connotation of a community leader involved in adjudicating legal cases. The individual has high status, but is one of many community leaders. In the books of Judges and Samuel, however, the term is typically used to refer to the supreme leader of the Yisra'elites—someone who combines the qualities of a military leader, governor and supreme judge. In those books, it is often more appropriate to translate the term as “champion” in recognition of the strong military component to the role.

**53c that were in your way:** Or, “that confronted you.” The author uses the phrase מִפְּנֵיכֶם (“from before you”) idiomatically. The nuance is difficult to capture succinctly in English, but the author is alluding to Yahweh's “driving out” (or “clearing out”) the native inhabitants of the land to make way for the Yisra'elites.

**53d when I felled those nations... it was really your god Yahweh who was driving them away:** It is interesting to note the evolution in the ideas about the conquest of the land that we see in Joshua and the books of the Torah. For the authors of Joshua's first compositional stage, the conquest is carried out by the Yisra'elites, but Yahweh is acting through them. Thus in Yehoshua's speech he says explicitly, “Keep in mind, when I felled those nations that remained in the territory designated for your tribes... it was really your god Yahweh who was driving them away from you.” However, roughly a century later, as part of what I call the third stage stage of Exodus (which I view as a collaboration between authors in Samaria and Yehud and which overlaps with both the second and third stages of Joshua), the authors have conceived of a conquest in which the Yisra'elites play no part in driving out the native peoples. Thus, in Exodus P40,1, Yahweh says that he will send a “plague” (הַצֵּרָעָה) in advance of the Yisra'elites, and this plague will drive out the native peoples “little by little” so that the land doesn't become desolate and overrun with wild animals, and so that the Yisra'elites have time to “increase in number” sufficiently to take possession of the country. Another century after that, in the work of the authors of Leviticus' fourth compositional stage during the early fourth century BCE, the view of the conquest has evolved still further. These authors entirely removed not only the Yisra'elites but

also Yahweh from the act of conquest. For those authors, the land itself “disgorges” the native peoples because their abhorrent conduct has made the land impure—there is no action by Yahweh and there is no physical conquest by the Yisra’elites, and the Yisra’elites take occupation of a land that is entirely empty (see the end of Lev P36,12 for the relevant passage). It was also these authors of Leviticus, I believe, who were responsible for detaching Joshua from the books of the Torah. On the work of these authors, see the discussion in the [essay](#) on Leviticus’ composition history in my translation of Leviticus.

**53e dispossessing them and removing them from your path:** Literally, “dispossessed them from before you.” Again, the nuance of the prepositional phrase (מלפניכם) in this instance) can only be captured in English with a full verbal phrase.

**53f Mosheh’s Torah scroll:** The author is alluding to the book of Deuteronomy in the form it had during his day, before the expansions from the Persian period had been added to it. It is also possible to translate this phrase as “the scroll of Mosheh’s teaching.”

**53g [those that remain with you]:** I understand this phrase as a comment added by the authors of the fifth stage. For the authors of the first stage, who were responsible for this *parashah*, all Kena’an’s native peoples except the inhabitants of Giv’on are exterminated entirely in the ban devotion. For these authors, it is the peoples of the neighboring lands whom the Yisra’elites should not “go among” and whose gods they should not worship. However, by the time of the second and third compositional stages—and certainly by the time of the fifth compositional stage—the authors incorporated traditions into Joshua suggesting that some native peoples were not wiped out in the ban devotion and remained in the land. I believe that the authors of the fifth stage added the small comment here to clarify that Yehoshua is talking about the peoples who live among the Yisra’elites and not those in neighboring lands.

**53h that you not call on their gods’ names, neither swearing by them, nor doing service to them, nor worshipping them:** In the conception of the authors of Joshua’s first compositional stage (those associated with the sixth-century BCE version of the Deuteronomistic History), giving service to and worshipping gods other than Yahweh is the ultimate wrong. This passage here in P53, which recalls the obligations owed to Yahweh as laid out in the book of Deuteronomy, sets up the action in the book of Judges, in which the Yisra’elites repeatedly stray from Yahweh and do “the worst thing” (עשה את הרע) by worshipping other gods. Note, for example, in Judges P8 (=Jud 2.11f): “Then the Yisra’elites did what Yahweh considered the worst thing of all—they gave service to the Ba’als and abandoned their ancestors’ god Yahweh who had brought them out of Egypt.”

**53i Yahweh has driven out from your path:** Literally, “Yahweh has dispossessed from before you.” See note 53e above.

**53j not a single person has opposed you up until now:** Note the exaggeration for effect and emotional impact. This is a common literary device used by ancient Hebrew authors. On the ancient Hebrew authors’ prioritization of emotional impact over narrative logic, see notes 11,2a, 29h, and 51g above.

**53k A single one of you will put to flight a thousand of them:** A common trope that is seen in treaty blessings. See, for example, the treaty blessing in Lev P52 (“Of you five will chase after one hundred of them, and one hundred of you will chase after ten thousand.”)

**53l your god Yahweh is going to fight for you, just as he promised you:** The author here is possibly alluding to Mosheh’s speech in Deut P1, which recounts the scouting expedition into Kena’an that is the subject of Num P53 - P55. In the speech in Deut P1 (which I believe reflects an earlier form of the story than the one preserved in Numbers), Mosheh says, “Your god Yahweh—who always travels in front of you—he himself will fight for you.” It’s also worth noting here the passage in Josh P19,1, which states that “Yahweh was fighting for Yisra’el.”

**53m But you must take extra care... this bountiful land that your god Yahweh has given you:** I understand the two sentences indicated here to be an addition to the text from fifth stage. Note in particular the reference to marriage alliances with foreigners, which is a concern in the late Persian period, and note also the idea that some native peoples remain in the land. In the earliest version of Joshua, all native peoples were exterminated except the Giv’onites, who made a treaty with the Yisra’elites. It is only in later stages—the second and third as well as the fifth—that the authors add material acknowledging the continued presence of some of the native peoples in the land. On the principle that the union of two things of a different nature results in impurity (a principle that applies to mixed marriages), see note 27d of my translation of Leviticus.

**53n [*those that remain with you*]:** I understand this phrase to be a comment added very late in the fifth compositional stage, some years after the addition discussed in the previous note. See note 53g above, which discusses an identical addition, likely made by the same author.

**53o won’t drive out these nations from you:** Literally “won’t dispossess these nations from before you.” See notes 53e and 53i above.

**53p they’ll trap and ensnare you, becoming a scourge in your sides and a barb in your eyes:** Nearly identical language appears near the end of Num P88,2, which is a speech of Yahweh to Mosheh providing instructions that he must pass on to the Yisra’elites regarding taking possession of the land. The author here expects the reader to recall the passage in Num P88,2. I believe this passage in Josh P53 is a very late addition to the text, whereas Num P88,2 is part of the earliest version of Numbers.

**53q not a single thing out of all the good things that your god Yahweh promised regarding you has failed to happen:** This statement reflects one of the central themes of Joshua: that the events in the book—the conquest and the division of the land—represent the fulfillment of the things Yahweh has promised the Yisra’elites as part of his treaty with them. The “good things” are specifically an allusion to the blessings in Deut P25, which Yahweh will bestow on his people if they adhere to the terms of his treaty with them.

**53r But it will also be the case...**: The final sentences of this *parashah* set up the action in Judges and the remainder of the Deuteronomistic History. These sentences are the original conclusion to Joshua, and serve as a dark and pessimistic ending to the book.

**53s so Yahweh will also bring down upon you every harmful thing:** This is an allusion to the curses in Deut **P26**, which Yahweh will inflict on his people if they break the terms of his treaty with them.

**53t Should you go and do service to other gods... you will very quickly disappear from the bountiful land that he has given you:** This summary statement foreshadows the events of Kings, and is the Deuteronomists' explanation for the Assyrian conquest of Yisra'el in the late eighth century BCE followed by the Babylonian conquest of Yehudah and the destruction of Yahweh's temple on Mount Zion in the early sixth century BCE. For the Deuteronomists, giving service to gods other than Yahweh is "doing the worst thing" (**עשה את הרע**), a phrase that is used frequently in Judges in connection with turning from Yahweh to the local Ba'als and Asherahs.

#### Notes to P54

**54a Yehoshua convened all the tribes of Yisra'el to Shekem...**: I understand the material in P54 - P56 to belong to the third compositional stage of Joshua, composed in the fifth century BCE by priests in Yahweh's cult at Mount Gerizim (and approved by the priestly leadership in the cult at Mount Zion). These *parashot* serve as a new conclusion to the book of Joshua, supplementing the original conclusion to the book in P53. This material surveys and summarizes the narrative of the shared books in the cult libraries maintained at Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim. Characters and events from Genesis, Exodus-Numbers (still a single book at the time P54 - P56 were composed), and Joshua are recalled. Notably, however, there is no mention of Mosheh, nor the revelation at Siynai, nor the book of Deuteronomy. As I discuss below in notes 54j and 54l, I believe these omissions were intentional, made in support the Samaritan authors' larger purpose in composing these *parashot*.

Indications of Samaritan authorship can be seen throughout these *parashot*. The most notable pieces of evidence of Samaritan authorship of this material, in my opinion, include: the setting at Shekem; the extensive allusions to the Samaritan book of Genesis (the only place in Joshua that mentions this book); disguised allusions to the Meeting Tent (which I have argued in my previous translations has a Samaritan origin); the omission of any mention of Mount Siynai (as I argue in my translation of Leviticus, the Meeting Tent was the primary locus of revelation for the Samaritans); the reference to the story of Balaq and Bil'am, which I understand to be a Samaritan addition to Numbers; and allusions to the Samaritan book of Leviticus, which at the time these *parashot* were composed was not yet associated with the books of the Torah, but which I believe was likely one of the shared books of the two cult libraries.

Given the purpose and content of P54 - P56, it is not surprising that we also see evidence that what was included and excluded from these *parashot* was highly contested and intensively negotiated between the leadership of the two cult locations. In the notes below, I point out several places where I see signs of compromise language resulting from these negotiations.

**54b in front of God:** In the material in the Torah that I view as having a Samaritan origin, the phrase “in front of Yahweh” always has the meaning “in front of the Meeting Tent,” whereas in the earliest layer of the Deuteronomistic History (whose authors were from Yehudah), the phrase has the meaning “in front of the treaty chest.” Because I view P54 - P56 to be a Samaritan composition, I understand the phrase “in front of God” here to mean “in front of the Meeting Tent.” And in fact, we know that the author of P54 - P56 viewed the Meeting Tent as being set up on Mount Gerizim, because he states explicitly in the conclusion of P55 that Yahweh’s shrine is in Shekem (i.e. on Mount Gerizim).

It is exceedingly odd that the term “in front of God” (לפני האלהים) is used here instead of “in front of Yahweh,” as the authors from Mount Gerizim almost exclusively refer to their god by the name Yahweh and only rarely use the term God (אלהים and האלהים) to refer to him. I believe the unusual phrasing is an indication that the text here was highly contested, with Yahweh’s priests in Yehud likely objecting to the use of the phrase “in front of Yahweh” because it implied the presence of the Meeting Tent. Thus what we see in P54 is likely the result of an intensively negotiated compromise between Yahweh’s priesthood at Mount Gerizim and his priesthood at Mount Zion, with both sets of priests ultimately settling on the less loaded phrase “in front of God.”

The rarity of the phrase “in front of God” is, in my opinion, a clear indication that the choice of this language here is deliberate. A count from Mandelkern’s concordance shows that the phrase “in front of Yahweh” is used more than one hundred times in the books of the Torah and the Prophets, including four times in Genesis, 21 in Exodus, 60 in Leviticus, 34 in Numbers, and 26 in Deuteronomy. However, outside this *parashah*, the phrase “in front of God” (לפני האלהים) appears in the Torah only in Gen P11 (in reference to the corruption of the earth in the story of Noah) and in Exod P32 (possibly a reference to a small portable shrine brought by Yithro on his visit to Mosheh in the desert). In the Prophets, the phrase “in front of God” appears only in Jud 21.2 (a reference to Yahweh’s shrine at Beyth-El). It is also worth noting that the phrase without the definite article (לפני אלהים rather than לפני האלהים) appears three times in the Psalms—Ps 56.14, Ps 61.8, and Ps 68.4 (only the latter of which clearly refers to Yahweh’s temple).

It is noteworthy that neither Mount Gerizim nor the Meeting Tent are explicitly mentioned in P54 - P56. Instead, what appear are alternative phrases that retain some measure of ambiguity—“Shekem” in place of Mount Gerizim; Yahweh’s “sanctuary” (מקדש, a term which can refer either to an open-air shrine or to a physical structure) instead of the Meeting Tent; and “in front of God” in place of “in front of Yahweh.” I believe the presence of these ambiguous phrases was to accommodate the priesthood at Mount Zion, who viewed their mountain as the place that Yahweh had chosen, and who thus objected to any explicit mention here of Mount Gerizim, of the Meeting Tent, and of language normally associated with the Meeting Tent (i.e. the phrase “in front of Yahweh” and the term מושכן, which is frequently used synonymously with the Meeting Tent in Exodus and Numbers). It is fascinating to observe in how many places in the books of the Torah and in Joshua we see similar examples of ambiguous language that can be explained as the result of compromises made between the priesthoods at Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion—compromises that were required for

both groups to accept a common text. I commented several times in my translation of Leviticus on this dynamic in places where it seemed the most obvious; now that I have completed my translations of the Torah and of Joshua, I have come to believe that this dynamic is much more extensive than I had initially understood.

**54c Your ancestors of ancient times... Terah... Avraham... Yitzhaq... Ya'aqov... Esaw:**

This *parashah* is the only place in Joshua that alludes to the book of Genesis. The fact that the only allusion to the book is in a passage by authors from Samaria, and that passages by authors from Yehudah/Yehud make no mention of characters, events, or themes from Genesis, provides strong support for the view that the book of Genesis is a Samaritan composition.

**54d I led him everywhere throughout Kena'an:** It is tempting to understand the Hebrew here as "led him to Kena'an;" however, the *hiph'il* of הֵלֵךְ ("lead, bring") followed by the preposition ב ("in") has the meaning "lead through." See BDB, p. 236, def. 1a and 1b of the *hiph'il*.

**54e I made his offspring numerous:** This is an allusion to the central theme of the book of Genesis—Yahweh's promise to make Avraham's offspring numerous as part of his binding agreement (ברית) with him.

**54f giving him Yitzhaq:** Note that there is no mention of Yishma'el. This omission was likely intentional, as the Yishma'el material is fundamental to the Avraham stories, and it almost certainly was a part of the version of Genesis known to the Samaritan author of this *parashah* in Joshua.

**54g Ya'aqov and his sons went down to Egypt:** It is very odd that the author here refers to the Yoseph narrative but omits any mention of Yoseph himself, as the Yoseph narrative was composed for the explicit purpose of connecting the Samaritan book of Genesis to Exodus, which I view as the first book of the Deuteronomistic History. We should presume the omission of Yoseph, like that of Yishma'el, was deliberate. It is conceivable that Yoseph's omission may have been a result of the negotiations on the material in these *parashot* with the priesthood at Mount Zion, but there is really no way to know.

**54h just as I had done within its borders:** Literally, "just as I had done in its midst." The Hebrew is somewhat awkward and it is possible that some words have fallen from the text. Assuming the text is not corrupt, the reference here seems to be to the plagues that Yahweh inflicted on Egypt.

**54i they cried out to Yahweh... he put a darkness... he made the sea go:** Note the shift from the first person to the third person. The author of the *parashah* has briefly lost track of the fact that this is the direct speech of Yahweh.

**54j you lived for a long time in the desert:** The omission of any reference to the giving of the ten commandments on Mount Siynai can only be intentional. There is some tension in the books of the Torah between the ברית (*bərit*) with Avraham, which functions as a binding agreement (not a treaty) and which has a Samaritan origin, and the ברית (*bərit*) between Yahweh and Yisra'el, which is a formal treaty (not a binding

agreement between individuals) and which is a concept that originates in the cult on Mount Zion. For the Samaritans, the Meeting Tent was the primary locus of revelation, and here in P54 they likely sought to minimize the importance of Mount Siynai by omitting mention of it. There is a similar tension in Leviticus, in which the (mainly) Samaritan authors have avoided mention of Siynai in several places. Indeed, the first references to Siynai in Leviticus appear in additions from authors of Leviticus' third compositional stage, who I believe were primarily associated with the priesthood at Mount Zion. For more on this topic, see note 1a in my translation of Leviticus.

It is most surprising to me that the priestly leaders at Mount Zion would have allowed the omission of any mention of Mosheh, Siynai, or the book of Deuteronomy in Yehoshua's speech in P54. Perhaps they were fully satisfied with their own version of Yehoshua's farewell speech in P53, which emphasizes the importance of adherence to the treaty recorded in the book of Deuteronomy, and so were willing to allow the Samaritans to present their own version of the farewell speech in terms that entirely ignored the southern version of Yahweh's treaty with his people.

**54k sending emissaries and summoning Bil'am Be'orsson:** In my translation of Numbers, I speculated that the material about Balaq and Bil'am (Num [P72,1](#)) was written by the author of the Yoseph material in Genesis. At the time, I didn't express a view on whether the author of the story of Balaq and Bil'am was from Samaria or Yehud. Having now worked through Joshua, however, I have come to see a stricter separation between Samaria and Yehud with respect to Genesis. Given the dependence of the story of Balaq and Bil'am on Genesis, I now think it more likely that the story's author was from Samaria. If, as I now suspect, the story of Balaq and Bil'am was a Samaritan addition to Numbers, it is not surprising that we find it mentioned here in P54.

**54l Then you crossed the Yarden and arrived at Yeriho:** It is noteworthy that the author of this *parashah* has transitioned directly from the story of Balaq and Bil'am to the crossing of the Yarden. He has omitted any mention of the intervening events in Deuteronomy: Mosheh's speech to the Yisra'elites in the plains of Mo'av, the second treaty between Yahweh and the Yisra'elites made there, and Mosheh's death. It is impossible to believe that this omission was not intentional. As discussed above, I believe that the author of P54-P56 was Samaritan; as such, one important goal he may have had in composing the material in these *parashot* was to downplay the treaty from Deuteronomy (a southern book) in order to elevate the laws and practices found in the Samaritan book of Leviticus. On the presence of Leviticus in P54-P56, see notes 55f and 55g below.

**54m Then I sent a plague:** The author uses the word **הצרעה**, which is traditionally translated as "hornets." The word occurs only here and in Deut [P7,1](#) and Exod [P40,1](#). All three passages in which the word occurs refer to Yahweh sending **הצרעה** into Kena'an and then **הצרעה** driving the native inhabitants from the land to clear the way for the Yisra'elites. I find the traditional translation "hornets" to be nonsensical, and believe that context requires a meaning such as "plague," which is how I have translated here. The verbal root **צרע** has the core meaning of "be afflicted with skin disease;" the meaning of "plague" proposed here is not far from that core meaning.



The passage in Exod P40,1 in which this word occurs is especially noteworthy, as I now view Exod P40,1 as a mostly Samaritan composition. The author of this *parashah* in Joshua is clearly familiar with Exod P40,1 and the ideas about the conquest of the land expressed there. See the discussion in the note directly below.

**54n it drove them out from your path... not because of your swords, and not because of your bows:** The tension between the comment here—that the natives were driven out by a plague from Yahweh and not by the Yisra'elites' swords and bows—and the conquest narrative in the first half of Joshua is striking. I understand the view of the conquest expressed here to be a primarily Samaritan concept developed in the late Persian period that rejected the violent conquest depicted in Joshua and that understood the settlement of the land to be a peaceful occupation. The clearest expression of the idea of a peaceful occupation of the land is Exodus P40,1, in which it is a plague sent by Yahweh that drives out the native peoples from the land. The authors of Leviticus' fourth stage (who I believe were priests at Mount Gerizim active in the early fourth century BCE) then take this idea of the peaceful occupation further: by viewing it through the lens of their unique theology of the land, they remove culpability from Yahweh as well as the people. For them, the abhorrent practices of the native peoples have made the land impure, and as a result, the land in its impure condition “disgorges” the native inhabitants (see Lev P36,12). (For more on these authors' idea of the peaceful occupation of the land, see note 45a of my translation of Leviticus.)

As we saw with the language used in the opening of P54 (discussed above in note 54a), it is fascinating to observe the ambiguity of the language here in the passage about the conquest. The language could be interpreted (just barely) to fit the violent conquest of the land described in P1 - P24, which was the view of the conquest held by the original authors of Joshua and likely also the priesthood at Mount Zion during the Persian period; but the language can also be interpreted as being consistent with the peaceful occupation of the land, which I believe was the view that the priesthood at Mount Gerizim had begun to develop during the fifth century BCE. Again, I think the best explanation of the subtle ambiguity here is that the language was negotiated between the two priesthoods, and that the resulting text represents a compromise that allowed both groups to read the text as supporting their own views.

It is interesting to see the Samaritan discomfort with the conquest narrative in Joshua here already in the third compositional stage, which I broadly date to the fifth century BCE and which I see as contemporaneous with Exod P40,1 discussed above. As I argue in my translation of Leviticus, the Samaritan discomfort with the conquest narrative evolved into something much more extreme by the early fourth century, which is when I date the fourth compositional stage of Leviticus. It was the authors of that stage, I believe, who successfully convinced their counterparts in the cult at Mount Zion to detach Joshua from the Torah and replace it with Leviticus.

**54o revere Yahweh and give service to him:** The verb that I translate as “give service to” is עָבַד. The core meaning of the verb is “perform work for someone, serve someone.” When used in connection with a god, the word specifically has the connotation of “worshipping” the god through participation in the god's cult, most especially by presenting offerings to the god and participating as required in



the festivals honoring the god. Yehoshua in his speech here is exhorting the people to attach themselves to Yahweh—to “revere” only him and no other gods, to make offerings to him alone, and to make those offerings in the approved manner within his cult and for reasons that are honest and legitimate.

The demand that the people acknowledge Yahweh alone as their god and reject all other gods is the central requirement of Deuteronomy. It is fascinating to observe how the Samaritan author of this *parashah* connects the central idea from Deuteronomy with the narrative of the Samaritan book of Genesis, yet at the same time omits any mention of Deuteronomy.

**54p the gods whom your ancestors gave service to in the region beyond the Great River and in Egypt:** The author intends for the reader to understand these gods as the gods of Avraham’s father Terah. This is clear from the material at the beginning of this *parashah*: “Your ancestors of ancient times—Terah, the father of Avraham and Nahor—lived in the region beyond the Great River and did service to other gods.”

**54q gods whom your ancestors gave service to, who are in the region beyond the Great River:** The phrase “who are in the region beyond the Great River” refers to the gods, not to the ancestors. This statement may be directly addressed to the descendants of the Assyrian colonists who were resettled in Samaria by Sargon in the late eighth century BCE after defeating the kingdom of Yisra’el and making it a province of the Assyrian empire. For an interesting study of Assyrian policies of deportation and resettlement as they affected Samaria, see K. Radner, “*‘The Lost Tribes of Israel’ in the Context of the Resettlement Programme of the Assyrian Empire,*” in S. Hasegawa, C. Levin, and K. Radner (eds.), *The Last Days of the Kingdom of Israel* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2019), pp. 101-123.

I do believe that the passage in 2 Kings 17 about the resettlement of Samaria with Assyrian colonists may preserve a faint historical memory of the circumstances that led to the initial composition of the book of Genesis. I am, however, in the minority on this point, as the consensus among most scholars today is that the passage in 2 Kings 17 is late and has no historical value.

**55a Yahweh drove all the peoples... away from us:** Note how the view expressed here fits both the Samaritan conception of the land being emptied by Yahweh in advance of the occupation, and the Yehudean view that Yahweh worked through the Yisra’elites to slaughter the native inhabitants and empty the land of them. See the discussion in note 54n above.

Notes to P55

**55b we too shall give service to Yahweh, for he is our god:** The people here commit to Yahweh as their god, including carrying out all cult obligations (“give service to” or עָבַד) to him—that is, to appear before him at the obligated times, to observe his festivals, and to present all offerings owed to him in the correct ways and at the altar authorized by him. As we see at the end *parashah*, Yehoshua makes a treaty between the people and Yahweh; we should understand the people’s formal acceptance of Yahweh as their god and the obligation to “give service to him” in the cult as their agreeing to the obligations imposed on them by the treaty.

On a separate note, the Leningrad Codex has a *parashah setumah* after “our god.”

**55c a very special god:** The adjective קדוש is usually translated as “holy,” but its base meaning is “be separate, different,” and I believe that is how it is being used here.

**55d If you abandon Yahweh... he'll do harm to you... after he had given you success:** This statement should be understood in light of the treaty blessings that follow from adhering to the treaty obligations (serving only Yahweh) and the treaty curses that follow from violating the treaty obligations (giving service to foreign gods). In this passage, Yehoshua is warning the people of the consequences of choosing Yahweh and then not living up to their obligations. From a modern perspective, we might say that he gives them this warning so that they can make a fully informed decision.

**55e You yourselves testify:** More literally, “You are witnesses to yourselves.” The construction used here—עַר בְּ—can have the nuance of either “be a witness against someone” or “be a witness to someone.” From context, it is clear that the latter nuance is intended. This construction is used with the same nuance at the end of Sam P23, during Samuel’s speech to the people at Gilgal to affirm the kingship of Saul.

**55f On that day Yehoshua made a binding agreement with the people, establishing laws and practices for them:** Note that the word I translate as “binding agreement” is ברית (*bərit*). In the Samaritan book of Genesis, the ברית functions as a binding agreement between Yahweh and an individual and his family, whereas in the conception of the Deuteronomists and the cult at Mount Zion, it specifically is a treaty between Yahweh and his people. I have commented several times on this different conception of ברית in my other translations; see, for example, note 6,1c in my translation of Exodus. In the material composed jointly by the two priesthoods during the Persian period, the “treaty” concept dominates and perhaps because of this the term עדות is preferred over the more ambiguous ברית. I have chosen to translate ברית here in P55 as “binding agreement” to reflect the Samaritan conception of the term.

The conclusion to P55, with its mention of Yehoshua’s making a “binding agreement” (ברית), establishing “laws and practices” (חֻק וּמִשְׁפָּט), and recording these in a “scroll of divine rules” (סֵפֶר תּוֹרַת אֱלֹהִים), is quite simply astonishing. We must ask ourselves what in the world the author had in mind: is he referring to some existing document that his readers would know, or rather is he simply connecting the people’s choice of Yahweh to the general idea of the agreement (ברית) between Yahweh and his people, without intending an allusion to any actual written document or specific laws and practices?

In my translation work on the Torah and Joshua, I have come to understand that the authors of these texts chose their words very carefully, and that they were in regular “conversation” with the material composed by the authors who preceded them and whose work they added to and revised. Looked at in this light, I think it is clear that when the author mentions a scroll containing laws and practices here in P55, he is referring to a real document. In the Torah, there are three documents that contain laws and practices which represent obligations under a treaty (or binding agreement)—the book of Deuteronomy, the book of Exodus, and the book of Leviticus. Given Joshua’s dozens of direct references to the book of Deuteronomy, including the important passage in P16 composed by the Samaritans, I think it is very clear that the Samaritan author here is not referring to Deuteronomy. And given the omission of

any reference to Siynai and the treaty there, I think it is also clear that the author is not referring to Exodus. Indeed, while this is wholly speculative, I believe that what we have at the end of P55 is actually a reference to the Samaritan book of Leviticus.

Thus, I understand the “laws and practices” in Josh P55 as a reference to the cult rules found in the fifth-century BCE version of Leviticus, some of which were addressed to Yahweh’s adherents in their capacity of presenting offerings to Yahweh, and others of which were addressed to Yahweh’s priests. My proposal that it is Leviticus the author of Josh P55 has in mind here fits neatly with the terminology used throughout the *parashah* to describe the people’s commitment to Yahweh—to “give service” (עָבַד) to him by performing offerings owed to him in the proper manner. As I discuss at length in my book on Leviticus, the core of the fifth-century version of the book consisted of ten ancient rule books regarding the rules for performing offerings to Yahweh—some rule books provide rules for the offerers and other rule books provide rules for the priests officiating the offerings. (Note that the fifth-century version of the book did not include any of the material from the so-called “Holiness Code”). If our author is referring to Leviticus, then that might explain the unusual frequency with which he uses the verb עָבַד (“give service to, perform one’s obligations [in the cult]”), which occurs eight times in P54 and seven times in P55.

It is astonishing that there is no mention here in P55 of an altar nor of any whole offerings or welfare offerings, as we expect to see these as part of the conclusion of the formal ceremony celebrating the ratification of a ברית between Yahweh and his people (see, for example, the ratification ceremony in Exod P41). There is no way to be certain, but it seems most likely to me that the absence of the altar and of any offerings reflects the outcome of the negotiations between the Samaritans and Yehudeans regarding the content of these *parashot*. (Recall from P16 that there is an altar on Mount Gerizim, but the compromise location of Shekem precludes that altar from being used or even mentioned here in P55.) Thus, while the Yehudeans have allowed the Samaritans to present a new “binding agreement” between Yahweh and his people involving the book of Leviticus, their condition for allowing this is that the ceremony for the ברית must remain incomplete, because it is not accompanied by any offerings to Yahweh nor any welfare offerings for the people.

**55g Yeohushua wrote those things in the scroll of divine rules:** While this is admittedly speculative, I believe this phrase is a reference to a fifth-century version of the book of Leviticus, which, as I argue in my translation of that book, was compiled by Yahweh’s priesthood on Mount Gerizim and which at the time the authors of Josh P55 were writing was likely still an independent scroll that had not yet been attached to the books of the Torah. In my translation of Leviticus, I proposed five compositional stages of the book, and I assigned the various fifth-century BCE versions to the second compositional stage. I argued that in the second compositional stage, Leviticus consisted of ten ancient cult rule books that had been preserved and stitched together into a single document by the priests at Mount Gerizim. As part of this process, I argued that the authors of Leviticus’ second stage had added headings to each rule book that read either “Yahweh said to Mosheh, ‘Speak to the Yisra’elites as follows,’” (for rule books intended for offerers) or “Yahweh said to Mosheh, ‘Speak to Aharon and his sons as follows’” (for rule books intended for priests). However, it now seems more likely to me that the version of Leviticus that our author is referring

to did not yet have the headings to the rule books, for it would be very odd to state here that “Yehoshua wrote those things in the scroll of divine rules” if the version of the rule books known to the author had the Mosaic headings. But if the rule books lacked the Mosaic headings, then it would be perfectly acceptable for the author of P55 to write that it was Yehoshua who wrote these rule books down for the people. In effect, the conclusion of P55 serves as a sort of origin story for the book of Leviticus, connecting its composition to Yahweh’s cult at Mount Gerizim and demonstrating both its antiquity and its great authority.

It is important to note that the phrase “the scroll of divine rules” (ספר תורת אלהים) is ambiguous and may be translated a number of different ways depending on how one understands the use of the word אלהים here. If one reads it as “God,” then the most natural way to translate the phrase is “God’s Torah scroll.” However, אלהים can also function in an adjectival sense with the meaning “divine” (see BDB, p. 43, def. 2c, and the examples given there). In that case, the phrase may be translated as “the scroll of divine teaching” or “the scroll of divine rules,” and that is how I understand the term here. I have chosen to translate תורה here as “rules” rather than teaching, as the term is used in Leviticus with a meaning much closer to “rules” than “teaching.”

**55h the oak tree that was in Yahweh’s sanctuary:** For the Samaritan authors, the phrase “Yahweh’s sanctuary” can only refer to the Meeting Tent and its courtyard. I believe the authors of this *parashah* did not mention the Meeting Tent by name here because their counterparts in Yerushalem objected to the explicit connection of the Meeting Tent with Shekem (i.e. Mount Gerizim), as this could be seen as implying that Mount Gerizim was “the place that Yahweh chose.” The use of מקדש (“sanctuary” or “holy place”) was thus a compromise, similar to the compromise choices of Shekem instead of Mount Gerizim and “in front of God” instead of “in front of Yahweh.” It is interesting that the term משכן (“shrine”) does not appear here, as this term is used synonymously with the Meeting Tent in both Exodus and Numbers. It is likely, in my opinion, that משכן was too closely associated with the Meeting Tent, leaving the term מקדש as the compromise solution. This compromise allowed the priests at Mount Gerizim to understand מקדש as the Meeting Tent and confirm in their minds that this was the place that Yahweh chose. The language also allowed the priests at Mount Zion to view the מקדש as an open-air shrine that had no permanent authorization as a place to present offerings to Yahweh, and so did not represent a challenge to the temple on Mount Zion as the place that Yahweh chose as the permanent home for his name.

The mention of an oak tree here is also very interesting. Because this *parashah* is set in Shekem, we expect to see a reference to a terebrinth tree (אֵלֶה) and not an oak tree (אֹלֶה). Recall that the terebrinth is closely associated with Shekem in the Samaritan book of Genesis: in Gen P16, Avram arrives in Kena’an and establishes his residence at the Teacher’s Terebrinth at Shekem; and in Gen P29, it is under a terebrinth at Shekem that Ya’aqov buries the Aramean gods of his family members. The Hebrew words for oak and terebrinth have the same consonants, but a different vocalization. It seems most probable to me that sometime after the split between the Samaritans and Yehudeans, the Yehudean priests made a deliberate decision to vocalize אלה here as “oak” and not as “terebrinth” as a sign of disrespect for the practice of Yahweh’s cult in Samaria. It is this vocalization that is preserved in the Masoretic text.

Finally, it is perhaps worth sharing one final speculation about this *parashah*. It is interesting that the terebrinth at Shekem in Gen P16 is named Teacher's Terebrinth (אלון מורה). The name does make one wonder if that terebrinth (which was almost certainly the tree that author of P55 has in mind in the passage here) has any connection to the "teachings" or "rules" (תורות) that were promulgated in Yahweh's cult at Mount Gerizim, and which I believe are preserved in the book of Leviticus.

**55i \*\*:** The Leningrad Codex has a *parashah setumah* here.

**56a serve as a warning to us:** The author writes תהיה־בנו לעדה. I understand the construction, which literally means something like "a testimony against," to have the nuance of "warning" or "admonition." I believe the noun phrase here has same nuance as the corresponding verb phrase. For the verb phrase, see def. 3 of the *hiph'il* of עור ("bear witness, testify") in BDB, p. 730, which states that the verb followed by the preposition ב ("against") has the meaning "warn, admonish."

**Notes to P56**

**56b every word that Yahweh spoke with us:** This is a reference to Yehoshua's speech in P54, which is presented as a speech from Yahweh. (Recall that Yehoshua begins his speech in P54 with the statement, "Here is what Yisra'el's god Yahweh says.")

**56c not to forget your god:** Literally, "lest you forget your god." By "forgetting" one's god, the author means specifically not carrying out the cult obligations owed to Yahweh as laid out in Leviticus.

**57a Sometime after these events:** I believe that the book of Joshua originally ended with P53, and that it was followed by the original opening of Judges, which was the account of Joshua's death in Judges P7 (=Jud 2.6-10). When in the fifth century BCE the Samaritans and Yehudeans first created the collection of the Torah from the pre-existing Deuteronomistic History (this involved adding the Samaritan book of Genesis to Exodus-Joshua, and removing Judges-Kings), a new ending for Joshua was composed here in P57. This involved the authors lifting material from Judges P7 and inserting it here in Joshua, and then adding the comment about Yoseph's bones, which was of special concern to the Samaritans.

**Notes to P57**

**57b Yehoshua Nunsson Yahwehsservant:** It is noteworthy that the author bestows on Yehoshua the same honorific surname given to Mosheh after his death—"Yahwehsservant." Mosheh earned the honorific by leading the people from Egypt, defeating the Egyptians at the Reed Sea, intermediating for the people at Mount Siy-nai, and making a treaty with the people in Mo'av containing the laws and precepts found in Deuteronomy. Yehoshua earned the same honorific for doing similarly great things: leading the people into Kena'an, fighting the battles of conquest, dividing the land for the tribes, and—equally important—making a binding agreement with them at Shekem containing the laws and precepts found in Leviticus. With the honorific surname of Yahwehsservant bestowed on Yehoshua, we see that he is truly the equal of Mosheh: the journey from Egypt to Kena'an began with Mosheh and ended with Yehoshua; the battles for control of the land occupied by the Yisra'elite tribes began with Mosheh (see Num P72) and ended with Yehoshua; the apportionment of land to the tribes began with Mosheh (Re'uven, Gad, and half of Menashsheh) and ended with Yehoshua; and the laws and obligations that Yahweh imposed on the

Yisra'elites in his treaties (or agreements) with them was given to the people partly by Mosheh (the ten commandments and the legal precepts in Exodus and the book of Deuteronomy) and partly by Yehoshua (the book of Leviticus).

**57c Around the same time, Yoseph's bones...**: This sentence is a contribution of the Samaritan authors of the third compositional stage. The author alludes to Gen P28,1, which preserves a tradition about Ya'aqov purchasing land from the Hemorssons in the town of Shekem. It's worth noting that much of the author's language here quotes directly from that passage in Genesis: "a section of the property" (חלקת השדה), "for one hundred *qesiytah*" (במאה קשיטה) and "the sons of Shekem's founder Hemor" (בני חמור אבי שכם).

**57d Also around this time El'azar Aharonsson died...**: I believe this sentence is an addition made by the authors of the fourth compositional stage, who showed a special interest in Piynehas.

**57e Piynehas' estate, which had been provided to him:** The author of this addition would have understood the Lewites as not owning any property outside the forty-eight towns they had been granted. For the *niph'al* of נתן with the meaning of "provide," see BDB, p. 681, def. 1c. To clarify, the authors must have presumed Piynehas did not own this estate, but rather than he was provided use of it in recognition of his special role and status.

**57f Total sentences in the book:** As a means to help safeguard the integrity of the text, at the end of each book of the Tanakh, the Masoretes included a short note (considered part of the *masorah gedolah*) that totalled up the number of sentences for that book. I have reproduced their note for Joshua here.

# The composition history of Joshua

When I began this project of translating the Torah and the Former Prophets, I didn't intend to spend a great deal of energy thinking about the composition history of these books. Very quickly, however, I realized that to be successful in expressing the books' ideas and thoughts in a natural modern-day English, I would need to connect on an emotional and personal level with their authors and, insofar as it is possible, understand the authors on their own terms. In translating this and other books, I have found that in order to make that emotional connection with the authors, I first had to form opinions about who they were, who their audience was, and especially what motivated them to write. What follows then is a summary of my views, developed over the course of this translation, about the circumstances behind the composition of Joshua and about the motivations of its authors in writing what they did.

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As a preliminary to examining the composition history of Joshua, it is important for the reader to keep in mind that the scholarly effort to reconstruct the composition history of the books of the Torah and the Former Prophets is an entirely speculative endeavor. If for the books of the Torah there are few real external controls that are productive anchors for the analysis, we have even less to go on in the case of Joshua. The single useful external control for Joshua is the evidence from Qumran;<sup>1</sup> from the fragments of Joshua found there, we can determine that a version of the book relatively close to the one we

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1 From cave four at Qumran, fragments of two manuscripts of Joshua were found—4Q47 (or 4Q Joshua<sup>a</sup>) and 4Q48 (or 4Q Joshua<sup>b</sup>). High-quality photographs of the fragments are published at the Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library, which may be accessed at [/https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/home](https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/home).

have today was in circulation by the early first century BCE.<sup>2</sup>

For the composition history of Joshua, the two most useful controls are its numerous connections to and dependencies on Deuteronomy, and the intertwining dependencies that Numbers and Joshua have with each other. The interconnections of these three books provide a framework for anchoring a proposed composition history of Joshua, for any plausible composition history must account for these connections and must also be consistent with the composition histories proposed for both Deuteronomy and Numbers. The dependencies on Deuteronomy tell us that the earliest version of Joshua must post-date the earliest version of Deuteronomy. And the mutual dependencies of Joshua and Numbers on each other—the narrative of Numbers assumes that of Joshua, and the narrative of Joshua assumes that of Numbers—provides a clear indication, in my view, that the earliest versions of both these books must have been composed at the same time and as part of the same larger project.<sup>3</sup> While this framework provides us with an extremely valuable starting point for the composition history of Joshua, there is still so much latitude within this framework that countless numbers of equally valid solutions are possible. One's own views on certain core issues—such as the nature of the contribution of the Samaritans and the extent to which the different “sources” were written independently of one another—will determine the overall outline of the proposed composition history, and it is not possible conclusively to prove or disprove such views.

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- 2 This is not the place to discuss the complicated textual history of Joshua. For those interested in the topic, see M. van der Meer, *Formation and Reformulation: The Redaction of the Book of Joshua in the Light of the Oldest Textual Witnesses*, Leiden: Brill, 2004. In that work, van der Meer argues that the numerous divergences of the Septuagint and the Qumran manuscripts from the Masoretic Text reflect “a reinterpretation and reformulation” of the book, and that they do not represent an older stage in the book’s composition history.
- 3 I understand Exodus-Numbers originally to have been a single book; the interdependencies of Joshua with that book are all located in the post-Sinai narrative—the portion of the book that was split off to become Numbers.



As discussed in my introductory note, my approach to Joshua's composition history follows my theory of the composition history of the Torah and the Former Prophets that I developed over the course of the work on my other translations.<sup>4</sup> Within Joshua, I see five distinct compositional stages, which closely mirror those that I identified in Numbers.<sup>5</sup> While this five-stage framework helps make sense of the messiness and many contradictions and inconsistencies in the text, it should be emphasized that the nearly continual writing, rewriting, supplementing and revising of the book over a period of centuries means that it is not always possible to separate with confidence the changes and additions made during one stage from those made in preceding or succeeding stages. With that caveat in mind, I present in detail below my views on the composition history of Joshua. As stated above, these views are highly conjectural—they are only one way of looking at the history of Joshua, and they are very much influenced by my own starting assumptions about the histories of ancient Israel and Judah; scholars with a different set of starting assumptions will come to a very different view of the book's history.

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I believe that the earliest stage of the composition of Joshua dates to the early sixth century BCE, when the priesthood in Jerusalem conceived of and commissioned the writing of a comprehensive historical chronicle to explain the loss of the land and destruction of the temple in light of the treaty between Yahweh and his people. The book of Deuteronomy and its understanding of the treaty provided the theological basis for this work. In the creation of this larger chronicle, I believe the book of Exodus-Numbers<sup>6</sup> was written and appended in

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4 For a summary of my views, see pages xv-xx above.

5 The second compositional layer of Numbers, which was part of the initial effort to integrate the narrative of Genesis with Exodus-Numbers, is absent from Joshua. But otherwise, there is a one-to-one correspondence with the other compositional stages of the two books.

6 I understand Exodus and Numbers originally to have been a single work. As discussed below, some time in the early fourth century BCE, Exodus and Numbers were broken apart when the Aaronide leadership at Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion made the joint decision to insert Leviticus into the Sinai narrative;

front of Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy itself was given a preamble and a concluding narrative, and the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings were written and appended to the new concluding narrative in Deuteronomy.

As I discuss in the introductory note to the reader, I am among those who see the composition of the books of the Torah as a joint effort between Yahweh's priesthood in Jerusalem and his priesthood on Mount Gerizim.<sup>7</sup> If we take this to be the case, one important question is when this partnership began. Given the evidence of friendly relations between Yehud and Samaria from very early on in the Persian period, and given that we know the Yahwistic community in Elephantine in the late fifth century sought the counsel of both groups in religious matters, it is plausible to suppose that this cooperation began shortly after the end of the Babylonian exile, in the late sixth or early fifth centuries BCE.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, I view the second, third, and fourth stages of the composition of Joshua as the joint work of the priestly leadership in Yehud and Samaria.

I understand the second and third compositional stages of Joshua as concurrent, with both stages extending across much, if not all, of the fifth century BCE. I assign the material from what I call the second stage to the priestly leadership at Mount Zion, and the material from

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in the years immediately before and after the addition of Leviticus to the books of the Torah, I believe the Aaronide authors extensively expanded Exodus and Numbers, giving them the structure that they have today.

- 7 B. Hensel in his article "[Debating Temple and Torah in the Second Temple Period](#)" offers a number of interesting thoughts along these lines. Also of interest is T. Römer, "[Cult Centralization and the Publication of the Torah between Jerusalem and Samaria](#)." (See footnote 9 in the translator's note to the reader for the full citations of these articles.)
- 8 With respect to cooperation between the leaders of Yehud and Samaria in religious matters, it is important to note that the leaders of the two provinces in 407 BCE wrote a joint reply to a request from Elephantine seeking permission to rebuild the temple to Yhw there. See document [B21](#) in B. Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 148-149. See also documents [B19](#) and [B20](#), copies of a letter sent to Bagavahya, governor of Yehud, which may be the actual letters that B21 is responding to. Both B19 and B20 mention additional letters sent from Elephantine to leaders in Samaria and to priests in Jerusalem, including the high priest. This is a clear indication that the diaspora community in Elephantine saw leaders in both Samaria and Yehud as relevant authorities.

what I call the third stage to the priestly leadership at Mount Gerizim.<sup>9</sup> One purpose of the additions of the second and third stages was to bolster the justification for the existence of the Levitical towns and for the Levites' special role in the cult that they had come to assume during the Persian period.<sup>10</sup> One other purpose of the collaborative additions of the second and third stages was to demonstrate that the Israelites had fulfilled their obligations to Yahweh upon entering the land through the practice of circumcision and the observance of the Passover. Finally, it was at the beginning of these two stages that the book of Joshua was detached from Judges and attached to the books of the Torah, which required the authors to write a new ending for the

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- 9 The ordering of the stages here is arbitrary. Joshua was originally a Yehudean book, and as a Yehudean book, I believe that the priests from Yehud played the "lead" role in the partnership with the priests from Samaria with respect to Joshua. Similarly, for the books with a Samaritan origin—Genesis and Leviticus—I believe the priests from Samaria were the ones who served as the "lead" partner. The second compositional stage of Joshua thus corresponds to what I call the fourth compositional stage of Numbers and the early fourth compositional stage of Exodus. That is, the same priests from Yehud were the principal authors of all that material. Similarly, the third compositional stage of Joshua has a great deal of overlap with the third compositional stages of Exodus and Numbers, with the same priests from Samaria serving as principal authors of much of that material.
- 10 We know nothing for certain about the history of the Levites and their role in the cult. Our only sources are the references to them in the Tanakh, and how one reconstructs the history of the Levites based on those references will be almost entirely determined by the assumptions one makes about the composition history of the materials in which those references appear. The papers published in J. Jeon and L. Jonker (eds.), *Chronicles and the Priestly Literature of the Hebrew Bible*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021 are interesting in this regard, as they give a good sense of the diversity of scholarly opinions regarding the history of the Levites.

My personal theory is that prior to the sixth century BCE, the Levites were largely an underclass of landless itinerants in Israel/Samaria and Judah/Yehud who had attached themselves to service within Yahweh's cult. Some were priests, but they did not have exclusive rights to the priesthood, and in many if not most cases they filled subordinate roles. In the vacuum resulting from the Assyrian conquest of Israel and the Babylonian conquest of Judah and the exile of the political and religious elite of both countries, I believe the Levites fought to take exclusive control of Yahweh's cult in both Mount Gerizim and Jerusalem, and that they had succeeded in this effort by the dawn of the Persian period. Thus I understand the authors of Joshua's second and third compositional stages to be Levites, and I believe that a fair amount of their editorial activity was motivated by the desire to secure their position within the cult and enhance their authority.

book that narrated Joshua's death. This was likely written by authors from Yehud, with contributions from authors from Samaria.

While I believe a fair amount of material in Joshua was jointly authored by priests of the second and third stages, there is quite a bit of material that can be clearly attributed to the Samaritan priests who were active in the third stage. In fact, the authors of the third stage contributed more material to Joshua than the authors of the second stage, likely because many changes were required to make the book—the earliest version of which they had no part in writing—acceptable to them. The overriding goal of the Samaritan additions of the third stage was to incorporate into the conquest and allotment narratives ideas and concepts important to them. Thus, they ensured through their additions that the Meeting Tent played a central part in the division of the land, and that Mount Gerizim (their holy mountain) was the site where an altar to Yahweh was built and where the Torah was read to all the people.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps most significantly, they composed a new farewell speech of Joshua in order to provide an origin story for the Samaritan book of Leviticus and to emphasize the importance of the Samaritan book of Genesis within the overall history of Yahweh's relationship with his people. Lastly, in the additions from this stage, the Samaritan priests also ensured the eastern Manassehites were included with the other tribes as belonging to Yahweh's people.

The fourth stage of Joshua is very small, containing just a single story comprising four *parashot*. I associate this stage with the Aaronide authors active in both Yehud and Samaria in the first half of the fourth century BCE. It was the authors of this stage who were responsible for detaching Joshua from the books of the Torah, at which time all Samaritan participation in the composition of Joshua likely would have ceased. But before Joshua was detached from the Torah, I believe that the Samaritans and Yehudeans agreed on adding a story which

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11 It is surprising to me that the priesthood in Mount Zion agreed to additions in Joshua involving Mount Gerizim. No doubt the two groups of priests intensively negotiated these additions. One may guess that the priests at Mount Zion may have ultimately allowed the additions because they were confident that their own traditions about Yahweh's selection of Mount Zion as told in the books of Samuel and Kings were not undermined by the presence of material about Mount Gerizim in Joshua.

examined the implications of the Deuteronomistic principle that there is only a single legitimate altar approved by Yahweh. While this is wholly speculative, I believe the purpose of this story may have been to address questions from (or conflict with) communities of Yahweh's devotees living in other provinces of the Persian empire, who may have wanted to establish a local altar to Yahweh on which to present their offerings to him.

I understand the final compositional stage of Joshua as a product of the second half of the fourth century BCE, and perhaps extending well into the third century. By this time, Joshua's association with the Torah (and with the Samaritans) was a distant memory, and it was simply one of the eight books in the collection known today as "the Prophets." While these books did not have the same authoritative status as the books of the Torah, they were still an important part of the temple library in Jerusalem. The priesthood would have continued making edits and changes to Joshua and the other books of the Prophets in this period. All the changes to Joshua in this stage were of three types: (1) short additions that preserved alternative traditions about the conquest and settlement of the land thought to be ancient; (2) clarifying glosses and parenthetical comments that were added to explain difficult or obscure phrases and references; and (3) additions to harmonize passages in Joshua with related material found elsewhere in the Torah and the Former Prophets.

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As stated above, I understand the earliest version of Joshua to be linked with the original composition of the Deuteronomistic History. Following the destruction of the temple and loss of political sovereignty in the 590s and 580s BCE, the temple leadership in Jerusalem turned to the book of Deuteronomy—which specified the curses associated with the people's violation of their treaty with Yahweh—in an attempt to understand and come to terms with their predicament. To explain the lessons learned to Yahweh's devotees, and to future generations, the leadership commissioned the composition of a historical chronicle covering the time from the origin of Yahweh's relationship with his people to the destruction of the temple and the exile of the leading Judeans to Babylonia. Contained in this chronicle, as I

have suggested above, were the early versions of Exodus-Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, as well as an expanded version of Deuteronomy. The material dating to the earliest version of Joshua is focused on the occupation of the land and the distribution of the land to the Israelite tribes. The authors of this version were especially concerned to show that both these events were the fulfillment of promises that Yahweh made in the books of Deuteronomy and Exodus-Numbers, and that the actions of the Israelites were fully in accord with the treaty obligations to which they were subject. In particular, the occupation of the land required that all native peoples living there be exterminated through the ban devotion, and the authors of this stage are careful to show that Joshua and the Israelites did ultimately fulfill their obligations in this regard. One important theme running throughout the earliest version of Joshua is the greatness of Joshua himself—he is presented as a brave and steadfast leader who has won Yahweh’s favor and who is the near-equal of Moses.<sup>12</sup>

The material in Joshua that I attribute to this earliest compositional stage is as follows:

—P1 - P7,2. These *parashot* relate the Israelites’ entry into Canaan, establish narrative connections with both Deuteronomy and Numbers, and introduce the key themes of the book, the most important of which is the requirement that the Israelites adhere to the treaty obligations imposed on them in the book of Deuteronomy. After Yahweh’s introductory speech in P1, Joshua gives the order to prepare to cross the Jordan (P2) and reminds the Reubenites and Gadites of their obligations to assist their kinsmen in taking possession of the land (P3). Following this, Joshua sends two men to scout the region around Jericho (P4). The story of the two scouts shows the greatest literary sophistication of any of the material in Joshua, and its author may have been asked to write it to make the overall narrative of the book more compelling to readers. The remaining *parashot* (P4,1 - P7,2) relate the miraculous stopping of the Jordan’s waters, the Israelites’ crossing of the Jordan, and the selection of twelve stones from the Jordan to

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12 This “great leader” theme is one of the main ways the authors of the Deuteronomistic History have structured their work. Joshua is one of a long line of great leaders who succeed because Yahweh is “with” them, beginning with Moses, going through Joshua, Samuel, David, and Solomon, and ending with Josiah.

commemorate the miracle of the crossing.

—P9. This short *parashah* tells of the reaction of the Amorite and Canaanite kings to the news of the Israelites' crossing of the Jordan.

—P11,1 - P15. The material in these *parashot* tells the story of the revelation of Yahweh's general to Joshua (P11,1); the capture and ban devotion of Jericho (P11,2 - P13); the crime of Akan Zerahsson (P13,1); the failed attack on Ay, the discovery of Akan's crime, and Akan's execution (P13,2); and the capture of Ay through a strategy of deception (P14 - P15).

—End of P16, core of P17, and all of P18 - P23,2. These *parashot* narrate the Israelites' campaigns against the local kings and the towns in their control, including the ban devotion of all people in the defeated towns. The principal events in these *parashot* include the formation of a coalition of the local kings against the Israelites (end of P16); the story of the Gibeonites' deception in making a peace treaty with the Israelites (P17); the local kings' attack on Gibeon (P18) and the Israelites' rescue of the Gibeonites (P19 - P19,1); the capture and execution of the five kings who had attacked Gibeon (P19,2); the capture of various towns and the ban devotion of their inhabitants (P19,3 - P21,1); the defeat of a coalition of kings led by the king of Hatzor, including the ban devotion of all the towns controlled by those kings (P22 - P23,1); and the extermination and ban devotion of the Anaqis who had remained in the land (P23,2).

—P23,4 - P24,31. These *parashot* are a list of the kings whom Joshua and the Israelites defeated.

—P29. I believe that in the original edition of Joshua, this *parashah* appeared before P28,1 and that it served as the original conclusion to the conquest narrative, which covers roughly the first half of the book. The material in this *parashah* specifically treats the grant of land to Caleb the Qenizzite, which—in accord with the larger “fulfillment” theme in Joshua—it presents as the fulfillment of Yahweh's promise to Caleb for his loyalty in the aftermath of the scouting expedition portrayed in Num P53.

—Core of P28,1. This material introduces the apportionment of the land west of the Jordan, which is the main subject of the second half of Joshua. Note that in the earliest version of Joshua, there was no mention of apportionment of land east of the Jordan, as that was done by Moses in the book of Numbers.

—The first half of P30, P31 - P33, and the second half of P34. The material in these *parashot* describes the boundaries of the lands that were allotted to the tribe of Judah (the first half of P30), the towns within the Judahites' territory (P31 - P32,1), and the boundaries of the lands allotted to the Josephites (P33 plus the second half of P34). Note that in the original edition of Joshua, there was a single lot cast for the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, which together comprise the Josephites.

—P36 - P43. These *parashot* describe the lands allotted to the tribes of Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan.

—First half of P43,1. This *parashah* relates the grant of land to Joshua Nunsson and concludes the apportionment of the land to the tribes.

—P44. This *parashah* relates the selection of six towns of refuge and—most importantly—reminds the reader that this was in fulfillment of a command that Yahweh made through Moses in Deut P18,6.

—P47,11 - P48. The first *parashah* here—P47,11—gives a brief summary of the conquest and apportionment of the land, presenting both as acts of Yahweh and as the fulfillment of the “good things” that Yahweh had promised his people. The following *parashah* (P48) wraps up the narrative about the Reubenites and Gadites and brings to a conclusion the story that began in Numbers about their occupation of land east of the Jordan. Note that in the original edition of Joshua, there is no mention of any Manassehites living east of the Jordan nor of their taking land alongside the Reubenites and Gadites.

—P53. This *parashah*, which presents Joshua's farewell speech to the Israelites, was the original conclusion to the book of Joshua. From a structural perspective, it serves as a counterpoint to Yahweh's speech that opened the book: it reminds the Israelites of the treaty obligations imposed upon them in the book of Deuteronomy, and it sets up the action for the book of Judges. The original version of Joshua did not include the story of Joshua's death; in the earliest version of the Deuteronomistic History, his death was related in the book of Judges.<sup>13</sup>

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13 See the discussion in note 57a above.



In my translations of Exodus and Numbers, I proposed that the first expansion of those books most likely occurred in the early decades of the Persian period, in conjunction with the linking of Genesis to a truncated version of the Deuteronomistic History.<sup>14</sup> I see no signs of editorial work on Joshua at this stage. Rather, I believe the first major expansions of Joshua took place some decades later, across most of the fifth century BCE, and were the result of the collaborative efforts of Yahweh's priesthoods in Yehud and Samaria. I have divided the work on Joshua during this period into two contemporaneous stages—the second compositional stage, which represents the work contributed by the priesthood in Yehud, and the third compositional stage, which represents the work contributed by the priesthood in Samaria. The second and third stages of Joshua correspond to what I have called the third and fourth compositional stages of Exodus and Numbers,<sup>15</sup> and I believe the same groups of authors from Yehud and Samaria were responsible for making all the expansions and revisions to Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua that occurred during this period.<sup>16</sup> Early in the Persian period, if not before, the Levites had assumed a dominant place in Yahweh's priesthood at Mount Zion and at Mount Gerizim as well; both priesthoods in the fifth century seem to have been led by Aaronides,<sup>17</sup> although the Aaronides had not yet secured

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14 As I have discussed elsewhere, I believe it was at this time that the priestly leadership in Yehud and Samaria began coordinating the work on the religious texts kept in their respective libraries. See my comments on pp. 172f and 180f in my translation of Numbers.

15 It should be noted that in Numbers I assign the third stage to the Samaritans and the fourth stage to the Yehudeans. Thus the third stage of Numbers corresponds to the third stage of Joshua, and the second stage of Numbers corresponds to the fourth stage of Joshua.

16 These same authors would also have been responsible for the expansions and revisions to Genesis and Deuteronomy made during this period. Because my understanding of the composition history of the Torah has evolved considerably since translating those books, I would need to go back and update my work on both books in order to have a firm view on which material from those books corresponds to the second and third stages of Joshua.

17 For evidence of Aaronide leadership of the cults at both Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion early in the Persian period, see footnote 10 of my essay on the composition history of Leviticus. On the question of dating when the Aaronides assumed exclusive control of the priesthood, see footnote 4 of the introduction to my translation of Leviticus.

exclusive rights to the priesthood. The fifth-century expansions to Joshua had two main purposes: (1) to enhance the authority of the Levitical priesthood and justify their ownership of the towns they occupied;<sup>18</sup> and (2) to incorporate ideas and concepts important to the Samaritans in order to make the book of Joshua acceptable to them and to ensure that the book merited a place within their cult library alongside the books of the Torah.

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As stated above, I have divided the expansions to Joshua that I ascribe to the fifth century BCE into two contemporaneous stages, a Yehudean second stage and a Samaritan third stage. While each of the two stages had different primary authors, the authors of the material in each stage almost certainly would have negotiated the content with their counterparts in the other cult location, and they would have inserted material and/or revised the text only after gaining agreement on how key issues were to be presented and on the use of potentially controversial terms and phrases. The material that I attribute to the second stage—that is, the material composed primarily by priests from Yehud—is as follows:

—Edit to P4.1. The authors of the second stage, who I believe were Levite priests, have inserted into this *parashah* a clause stating that it is the Levite priests who were carrying Yahweh’s treaty chest.

—Beginning of P5. I believe the authors of the second stage added the first sentence of this *parashah* in order to highlight the importance of the miraculous crossing of the Jordan and to emphasize the idea that Yahweh is somehow physically “present” in the stopping of the waters. See my comments in note 5a above.

—P8. This *parashah* was added to the narrative of the crossing of the Jordan in order to highlight the role of the priests in the crossing,

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18 It is interesting to speculate that in the aftermath of the fall of the northern and southern kingdoms in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE, the Levites may have occupied and gained control of numerous partially abandoned towns, and that they created the notion of a grant of property from Yahweh to justify their control of these towns. This might explain the presence of the material about the Levitical towns that we see in Numbers and Joshua.

to specify that the commemorative stones taken from the Jordan were placed in Gilgal (the material from the first compositional stage did not mention where the stones were placed), and to connect the miraculous crossing of the Jordan explicitly to the miraculous crossing of the Reed Sea. I assign this material to priests from Yehud rather than Samaria because of the presence of Gilgal, which was venerated in the traditions of the Yehudean cult but not in the traditions of the Samaritan cult. It is also worth noting the presence of the sort of commentary at the end of the *parashah* that is typical of Persian period expansions, but that is rarely seen in the earliest editions of the narrative portions of the Deuteronomistic History.

—P10-P11. This addition was a joint effort with the Samaritan priesthood. See the discussion of this addition in my comments on the third compositional stage below.

—Edit to P17; middle section of P17, plus the final sentence. The authors of the second and third stages made significant additions to this *parashah*. The material they added specifies that the Gibeonites serve as gatherers of wood and drawers of water for the “community” and also for Yahweh’s cult. I believe that these authors made two separate additions to the *parashah* at different points in the decades they were active. This would explain the tension between the middle of the *parashah*, where the Gibeonites serve only the community, and the concluding sentence of the *parashah*, where the Gibeonites serve the community and also have a role in the cult. The addition in the concluding sentence of this *parashah* must have been intensively negotiated between the Yehudeans and the Samaritans, as is indicated by the presence of the phrase “the place that he chooses.” See the discussion in the notes to P17 above.

—P23,3. This *parashah* was added as a supplement to the preceding conquest narrative in order to make the account of the conquest comprehensive. It reminds the reader that in addition to the territories taken west of the Jordan, the Israelites also defeated kings and took possession of lands east of the Jordan. This *parashah* represents what I believe is another example of a truly collaborative composition between the priesthoods in Samaria and Yehud. Both priesthoods would have had reasons to want this material added—the Samaritans specifically would have wanted it added to remind the reader that the eastern Manassehites received a grant of land from Moses. It should

be mentioned here that, although I have a slight preference for locating this *parashah* as part of the second and third compositional stages, it would fit equally well in the fifth compositional stage, after Joshua had been separated from the Torah and the Samaritans had rejected the book.

—First half of P25. This material specifies the land that remains to be conquered. It likely was added late in the second stage, when the authors of the second and third stages began to question the idea of the complete extermination of the native peoples presented in the original version of Joshua. It is also possible to view the material in the first half of P25 as dating to the fifth compositional stage, although I have a preference for the second stage. (In any case, this *parashah* was the subject of numerous edits by the authors of the fifth stage—see the discussion of the fifth compositional stage below.)

—P26 - P27. The material in these *parashot* reminds the reader of the land that Moses granted the Reubenites, Gadites, and half of the tribe of Manasseh east of the Jordan river, and it provides a broad description of those lands and the towns located therein. Although I have assigned primary authorship to priests in Yehud, the material in these *parashot* contains, in my opinion, a number of elements that clearly indicate Samaritan influence; I treat these elements in my discussion of the third compositional stage below. I believe these *parashot* were added to Joshua to address a perceived incompleteness in the book's treatment of the allotment of the land. In the original edition of Joshua, only nine tribes<sup>19</sup> were allotted land, as two tribes—the Reubenites and Gadites—had been allotted land by Moses prior to the crossing of the Jordan. The additions here provide a complete description of the allotment of the land to the Israelite tribes and so provide a convenience for readers, who no longer have to refer back to Numbers to see the entire picture of the tribal territories.

—Edit to P28,1. In this *parashah*, the authors of the second stage (with the approval of the authors of the third stage) have added the reference to Eleazar the Priest. The purpose of this addition was to demonstrate that the priesthood played a co-equal role with Joshua in

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19 The authors of the first stage treated the Josephites (i.e. Manasseh and Ephraim) as a single tribe in the allotment.

the division of the land.

—Movement of P29 and conclusion to P29. In the earliest version of Joshua, I believe that P29 directly followed P24,31 and preceded P28,1. The authors of the second stage likely moved P29 to its present position because its subject was the allotment of the land, and they wished for P28,1 to introduce all the material relating to the allotment of the land (see the discussion in note 29a). In an earlier edition of the second stage (prior to the movement of P29), I suspect that the concluding sentence to this *parashah* may have been added to mark more clearly the end of the conquest narrative and the beginning of the narrative about the division of the land (see the comments in note 29k).

—P45 - P47,10. The material in these *parashot* treats the grant of towns for the Levites to live in, fulfilling Yahweh's command to Moses in the book of Numbers (Num P91). As with P25 - P28, these *parashot* show many signs of Samaritan influence, so that it is possible to view this material as a true collaborative effort. That said, I see the priests from Mount Zion as the primary authors of this material because Joshua is primarily a Judean/Yehudean book and over the course of my translation work on the books of the Torah, it has become clear to me that the cult location responsible for the initial composition of a book retained a great amount of control over the subsequent additions to that work. In any case, it is interesting to observe the items in P45 - P47,10 that appear to be "negotiated" or that represent compromises between the Samaritans and Yehudeans. Thus we see that the Samaritans succeeded in getting the Yehudeans to agree that the allotment of the Levitical towns happened at Shiloh (a northern site venerated by the Samaritans); we also see that the Yehudeans succeeded in getting the Samaritans to agree that the first lot (which was for the grant to the highest status clan, the Qehathites) should be for towns from the three southern tribes—Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. Finally, it is worth noting that there are more Levitical towns in the northern tribal territories (25) than the southern tribal territories (23), perhaps representing a final compromise to compensate the Samaritans for locating all Qehathite towns in the south.<sup>20</sup>

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20 Recall that there is evidence of Aaronide (i.e. Qehathite) leadership of the cults at both Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion during the fifth century, when the

—P57. The authors of the second and third compositional stages added this *parashah* in order to give Joshua a new ending. In Joshua's first compositional stage, the book was part of the collection that we today call the Deuteronomistic History, and the transition between Joshua and Judges was a smooth one.<sup>21</sup> But once the priesthoods at Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim began partnering on the edits and additions to the books in their libraries, Joshua was separated from Judges and attached to the initial collection of the books of the Torah, which at the time consisted of Genesis, Exodus-Numbers, and Deuteronomy. And once Joshua was separated from Judges, the previous conclusion to Joshua (P53) created a very abrupt ending to the book and to the collection of the Torah as a whole. To rectify this, the authors of the second and third stages agreed to transpose material from Judges about Joshua's death and insert it at the end of Joshua to create a new conclusion to the book. In addition, as I discuss below, they agreed to add the new farewell speech in P54 - P56. I believe the work on P57 was primarily a joint effort, but I have included discussion of it here in the second stage because, as discussed above, I see the Yehudeans as having the principal responsibility for the expansions and revisions made to the book that originated with them.

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I have assigned all the additions and revisions to Joshua made by Samaritan priests during the first half of the Persian period to the third compositional stage. I view this stage as fully contemporaneous with the second stage, to which I have assigned the revisions and expansions made by Yehudean priests during that same period. As stated above, I believe that a fair amount of the material from the second and third stages was composed as part of a joint effort between the two priesthoods. For the sake of convenience, I have assigned that material to the second compositional stage. The material that I assign to the

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revisions and expansions of the second and third stages were being made. See [footnote 10](#) of my essay on Leviticus' composition history for a brief discussion of the family connections between the two priesthoods.

- 21 At this stage, Josh P53 (the original ending of Joshua) would have been followed directly by Judges P7 (=Jud 2.6ff).

third compositional stage represents revisions and expansions that, in my view, clearly originate with Yahweh's priesthood in Samaria.

The material that I attribute to the third compositional stage is as follows:

—Edits to P3 and P7.1. In both these *parashot*, the Samaritan priests at Mount Gerizim have inserted the reference to “half the tribe of Manasseh.” Both passages are about the requirement that the tribes living east of the Jordan participate in the conquest of the lands west of the Jordan.

—P10 - P11. These two *parashot* are the account of Joshua's circumcision of the Israelites at Gilgal, the observance of the first Passover in Canaan, and the cessation of the *man*. Circumcision is of special importance in the Samaritan cult, and for that reason I believe the material in these *parashot* was shaped primarily by the priesthood at Mount Gerizim.<sup>22</sup> That said, there is much material in these two *parashot* that might have been contributed by the priesthood in Mount Zion, such as the material about the Passover and the *man* and the references to the wilderness wanderings, all of which reinforce Joshua's connections to the narratives in Exodus and Numbers. For that reason, I view P10 - P11 as a true collaborative composition between the priesthoods in Samaria and Yehud, although the impetus for adding this material to Joshua likely came from the Samaritans.

—P16, excluding the end. The material specified here relates the story of Joshua's building an altar on Mount Gerizim,<sup>23</sup> the presen-

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22 It should be noted that there were different conceptions of the term ברית (*bərīt*) in the northern and southern cults. In the south, the *bərīt* between Yahweh and his people is a “treaty” that imposes obligations upon both parties. In the north, the *bərīt* functions more as a “binding agreement” between Yahweh and an individual; both parties have obligations to the other in the binding agreement, and the obligations extend to the individual's family. Although circumcision seems to have been universally practiced in Judah, in the southern cult it was not a specific treaty obligation owed to Yahweh; thus there is no requirement of circumcision mentioned in Deuteronomy or in the earliest version of the Deuteronomistic History. In the northern cult, by contrast, the binding agreement with Yahweh did impose the obligation of circumcision, and thus we see special attention given to the requirement of circumcision in the Samaritan book Genesis.

23 In the version of Joshua in the second and third stages, the altar could only have been built on Mount Gerizim; this was changed by the Yehudean priests to read

tation of whole offerings to Yahweh, and Joshua's writing out of a new, second copy of the book of Deuteronomy,<sup>24</sup> followed by Joshua's public reading of the book of Deuteronomy.<sup>25</sup> I believe that the addition of this exceptionally important material to the book of Joshua should be understood as formally marking the Samaritans' acceptance of the book of Deuteronomy as relevant for the cult on Mount Gerizim. The two priesthoods must have intensively negotiated the material in this *parashah*, and it is fascinating to read it through the lens of that dynamic. I speculate that the Samaritan priests demanded that Joshua include an account of the creation of a second copy of Moses' Torah (i.e. Deuteronomy) that could be associated with their cult at Mount Gerizim, and that the priests at Mount Zion acceded to their demand, resulting in the addition of Deut P24 and of the material here in Josh P16. It is interesting to note that there is no mention here of the copy of Moses' Torah that, as we know from Deut P30, is kept in a side compartment in the treaty chest. It is also interesting to note that although the building of the altar is explicitly said to be authorized by Moses, the account of Joshua's making of a new copy of Moses' Torah omits any mention of authorization by either Yahweh or Moses.<sup>26</sup> One may imagine that the absence of a reference to the copy of Deuteronomy stored in the treaty chest and the absence of an explicit reference back to Deut P24 in the account of Joshua's writing out a copy of Deuteronomy were both the result of the give and take in negotiations, in which the Samaritans yielded on some points and the Yehudeans on others. But looking at P16 as a whole plus the related Samaritan addition in

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Mount Ebal some centuries later, after the break between the Samaritans and Yehudeans in the second century BCE.

- 24 Recall that in the Deuteronomistic History in Deut P30, Moses writes out a copy of the book of Deuteronomy and has it placed inside Yahweh's treaty chest.
- 25 The material in P16 functions as the fulfillment of Deut P24, which I now believe was an addition to Deuteronomy made by the Samaritan priests at the same time that P16 was added to Joshua.
- 26 That is, the author does not state that Joshua made a copy of Moses' Torah "just as Moses commanded" or "just as Yahweh commanded Moses" (in reference to Deut P24). Such formulaic language is used numerous times elsewhere in Joshua to demonstrate that actions are approved by Yahweh and/or are in fulfillment of his commands through Moses, and its absence here is very unusual given the significance of the events being described.



Deut P24, I think it is fair to say that the Samaritans came out on top in these particular negotiations, as they somehow won the Yehudeans' acceptance of locating everything in this *parashah* on Mount Gerizim—the altar to Yahweh, the writing of the copy of Moses' Torah, and the public reading of the Torah. The fact that Yehudean priests changed the location to Mount Ebal more than three centuries later can perhaps be seen as an indication of just how much this passage must have bothered the priesthood in Yehud.

—Middle of P17 plus the concluding sentence. The composition of this material was a joint effort with the Yehudean priesthood. See the discussion of this addition in my comments on the second compositional stage above.

—Edit to P25 plus P27,1. In P25, which is an account of the land that remains to be conquered, the Samaritans added the references to “half the tribe of Manasseh,” including the lengthy parenthetical comment about the lands taken east of the Jordan. The Yehudeans likely were the primary authors of the account of lands granted to the Reubenites and Gadites in P26 and P27. To this account, the Samaritans added P27,1, which specifies the land that Moses granted to the Manassehites living east of the Jordan.

—Edit to P28,1. The authors of the third stage have added the references to the number of tribes east and west of the Jordan, reminding the reader that tribes east of the Jordan received land from Moses. This addition from the third stage prompted a further expansion of the *parashah* in the fifth stage—in my translation, I represent the addition from the fifth stage in italics.

—First paragraph of P34. In the earliest edition of Joshua, there was a single lot for the Josephites (Ephraim and Manasseh). The authors of the third stage have added the first paragraph of P34 in order to give Manasseh its own lot and, equally important, to show that the eastern Manassehites living in the Gilead and Bashan regions were considered part of Yahweh's people. (The composition history of P34 is quite complicated; see my thoughts on this topic in note 34b above.)

—P34,1. The authors of the third stage have added this *parashah* to address the problem of a single allotment being given to two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, resulting in land that was inadequate for their large population. The references to non-Israelites still living in the land suggest that this addition was made late in the third stage,

when the idea that the conquest exterminated all native peoples living in the land (as portrayed in the earliest compositional layer) either began to be questioned or ceased to be of importance.

—P35. The authors of the third stage added this *parashah* to express their views on where the division of the land took place. As I discuss in note 35a above, there must have been disagreement about whether the division of land took place at Gilgal (favored by the Yehudeans) or whether it took place in front of the Meeting Tent at Shiloh (favored by the Samaritans). The compromise solution was that the division of the land took place in both locations, with some tribes receiving their allotments at Gilgal and others at Shiloh. The Yehudeans thus must have allowed the additions and edits we see in P35 - P43 that alter the original narrative about the allotment (which took place entirely in Gilgal) so that seven tribes receive their allotment at Shiloh.

—Edits to P38, P39, P40, P41, P42, and P43. The authors of the third stage have added references to the number of the lot cast (e.g. second, third, fourth, etc.) to reflect the fact that there was a separate division of land for seven tribes. They have made no other changes to these *parashot*.

—Second half of P43,1. The addition specified here represents the conclusion to the allotment that occurred at Shiloh. Note that by inserting this addition directly after, rather than directly before, the grant of land to Joshua, the authors of the third stage ensure that the grant of land to Joshua happens at Shiloh.

—Additions to P44. The authors of the third stage have added two sentences to this *parashah* in order to provide additional detail on the practical implementation of the towns of refuge. They have also added a clause at the end of the *parashah* for the same reason. Their additions to this *parashah* are in close agreement with the material about the towns of refuge in Numbers P92, which I believe these same individuals also wrote (see note 44e above).

—Contributions to P45, P46,1, P47,3, P47,4, P47,5, and possibly elsewhere in P46 - P47,10. The authors of the second stage likely were the primary authors of the material about the allotment of towns to the Levites' clans in P45 - P47,10. However, the composition of this material would have been in partnership with the authors of the third stage. Thus we see several indications in these *parashot* that the Samaritans influenced the text in order to address issues important to them on

the topic of the Levitical towns. In P45, for example, they added the reference to Shiloh, and in P46,1, P47,4, and P47,5 they were responsible for the references to half of the tribe of Manasseh. The Levites' towns located in Ephraim are given in P47,3, and we can be fairly certain that the Samaritan authors either composed this *parashah* or influenced its wording. These are the places in the treatment of the Levitical towns in P45 - P47,10 where we can be certain the Samaritans influenced the wording; in addition, it is likely they had some influence on the wording in some of the other *parashot* in this material.

—Edit to P48. The authors of the third stage have added the reference to half the tribe of Manasseh. In the earliest edition of Joshua, only the Reubenites and Gadites were mentioned in this *parashah*.

—P49. The Samaritan authors of the third stage composed this *parashah* to serve as a farewell from Joshua to the eastern Manassehites. Joshua's farewell to the Reubenites and Gadites in P48 must have been unsatisfactory to them. By adding the farewell here in P49, they are able to connect the eastern Manassehites with the fulfillment of the blessings of Genesis (a Samaritan book), which promise great wealth to Jacob's descendants (see note 49c above).

—P54 - P56. The Samaritan authors—with the agreement of the Yehudeans—have composed and inserted a new farewell speech from Joshua. This speech in a way supersedes the old farewell speech in P53 and, with the material in P16, represents the most important contribution to Joshua made by the priesthood at Mount Gerizim. This new farewell speech is given at Shechem (a town located at the foot of Mount Gerizim and so of special importance to the Samaritans) and takes place “in front of God.” This latter phrase is almost certainly a reference to the Meeting Tent.<sup>27</sup> The speech summarizes many of the events in the narrative of the books of the Torah, and most especially includes the patriarchal stories from the Samaritan book of Genesis, as well as references to the story of Balaq and Balaam in Numbers (which I believe was also a Samaritan composition). Along with many scholars, I believe that the speech was intended to serve as

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27 See notes 54b, 55f, and 55h for a discussion of the unusual terminology in P54 - P56, which I argue reflects compromise language that must have been intensively negotiated between the Samaritans and Yehudeans.

a conclusion to the entire Torah, for Joshua was attached to the Torah collection until its removal in the late fifth or early fourth century BCE. The main point of the speech is to encourage the Israelites to reject all foreigners' gods still with them, and to make a formal declaration that they will give service only to Yahweh. Most notably, at the conclusion of the speech, Joshua makes a binding agreement (ברית) with the Israelites, establishing "laws and practices" that serve as the terms of this agreement, and then records these in "the scroll of divine rules." As discussed above in the notes to these *parashot*, I believe the scroll of divine rules is a reference to an early version of Leviticus, which at the time was an independent book. Most importantly, I believe these *parashot* were composed and added to Joshua to signify the formal recognition of Leviticus as having authority equal to the other books of the Torah held in common by the two cult libraries. In these *parashot*, the Samaritan authors thus highlight the two books originating in Samaria—Genesis and Leviticus—and demonstrate their importance in the history of Yahweh's relationship with his people. In so doing, they implicitly make the case that both books have an integral place in the collection that grew out of the Deuteronomists' original historical chronicle and that for the cults at Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion served as the authoritative record of Yahwism—the books of the Torah.

—Edit to P57. The authors of the third stage have inserted the material about the relocation of Joseph's bones to Shechem.

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In the schema that I have developed for the composition history of the books of the Torah, I propose that the priesthoods at Mount Gerizim and Mount Zion made the joint decision to remove Joshua from the books of the Torah and replace it with Leviticus as part of the work associated with what I call the third and fourth compositional stages of Leviticus, which I date to sometime early in the fourth century BCE.<sup>28</sup> The revisions and expansions made as part of the third stage of Leviticus, fifth stage of Numbers, and late fourth stage of Exodus

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28 In my schema for the Torah's composition history, the third compositional stage of Leviticus corresponds to what I call the fifth compositional stage of Numbers and the late fourth compositional stage of Exodus.

served to elevate the status of Aaron and his descendants and, most importantly, provided justification for limiting the priesthood to the Aaronides alone while demoting all other Levites to subservient roles within Yahweh's cult.

Prior to these Aaronide authors removing Joshua from the books of the Torah, I believe they did make one significant addition to Joshua—the story of the altar built by the Reubenites and Gadites that appears in P50 - P52. This story was likely composed to address the threat posed by the desire of diaspora communities for an altar in their own location on which they could present their offerings to Yahweh (see note 51k above). While I view these *parashot* as a collaboration between priests from Mount Gerizim and priests from Mount Zion, there are signs the priests from Mount Gerizim played a larger part in shaping this material.<sup>29</sup> As I argue in my translation of Leviticus,<sup>30</sup> I believe it was the priesthood at Mount Gerizim that insisted on Joshua's removal from the Torah because of their unique theology of the land, which was profoundly at odds with the portrayal of the conquest in Joshua. As discussed in the notes to P50 - P52, the story of altar originally involved only the Reubenites and Gadites. I believe the mentions of "half of the tribe of Manasseh" in these *parashot* were added not by the priests from Mount Gerizim (who added most of such references elsewhere in Joshua and in Numbers), but rather by authors of Joshua's fifth compositional stage. The authors of Joshua's fifth stage, who were associated exclusively with the cult in Yehud, added these references to harmonize this story with the material about the eastern tribes appearing elsewhere in Joshua and in Numbers.

The primary indication that the story of the altar was composed by the Aaronide authors of Numbers' fifth stage is the leading role of Phineas Eleazarsson. Phineas is the grandson of Aaron, and the material in Numbers about him is used to justify his descendants' permanent hold on the priesthood and its removal from the other

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29 The two main signs of Samaritan influence in these *parashot* are the initial setting at Shiloh and the idea that the lands outside Canaan—including territories inhabited by Israelite tribes—are "unclean" (an idea that, as I argue in my book on Leviticus, reflects the unique theology of the land developed at Mount Gerizim).

30 See notes 45a and 45,1c of my translation of Leviticus.

Aaronide families.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the story in P50 - P52, the Aaronide authors have also added the brief comment at the end of P57 about the death of Eleazar and his burial on the estate that his son Phineas has been granted use of. See note 57e above.

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Once Joshua was detached from the books of the Torah, it almost certainly would have received much less editorial attention from the priesthood in Yehud than previously. That said, the book remained a part of the temple library and, while its status was not as elevated as the books of the Torah, it must have been viewed as equal in status to the other books of the Former Prophets. These are the circumstances that provide the background for Joshua's fifth and final compositional stage. I presume this stage began sometime in the mid-fourth century and continued for a century or longer, when notions of a fixed "canon" began to appear.<sup>32</sup>

It was during these centuries that the institution of what ultimately became the synagogue began to emerge from the religious practices of Yahweh's devotees,<sup>33</sup> the majority of whom lived far from the two cult sites with altars for presenting offerings in Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim. Also around this time, it is likely that copies of the books of the Torah, the Former and Latter Prophets, the Psalms and some of the other books of the Writings began circulating outside the cult libraries. As study and reading of the books of the Torah

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31 On this, see note 74c to my translation of Numbers.

32 In this regard, it is worth noting that the work of Ben Sira, who was active in the early second century BCE, seems to presume as canonical all the books of the Torah and the Former and Latter Prophets, including Joshua. See, for example, the allusions to the characters of the Torah and Former Prophets in *Sirach* 44 - 49, which appear in the same order as the order of the books of the Torah and of the Former and Latter Prophets as we have them today.

33 For an excellent discussion of the origins of the synagogue, see L. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 19-41. The earliest firm evidence for synagogues in the diaspora comes from Egyptian inscriptions dating to the third century BCE; on these, see Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, pp. 75f.

and the Prophets and some of the Writings became a regular part of the religious practices of Yahweh's devotees, it seems certain that questions would have arisen about confusing matters in the text or about what appeared to be omissions in the text—and it also seems certain that these questions would have been brought back to the priestly leaders in either Jerusalem (in the case of the books of the Torah, Prophets, and Writings) or Mount Gerizim (in the case of the books of the Torah alone), who would have felt some responsibility to clear up these confusions and to address the obvious omissions.

Obviously, the scenario I have painted here is hypothetical, but I believe that some scenario such as this explains the circumstances surrounding the fifth compositional stage of Joshua. It is worth noting that apart from the addition of three brief passages,<sup>34</sup> the editorial activity in this stage consisted only of adding comments and glosses to clarify obscure and confusing items in the text and to harmonize passages with material appearing elsewhere in Joshua, the other books of the Former Prophets, and the books of the Torah. Thus, to Joshua's fifth compositional stage, I assign nearly all the material that I translate in italics and much of the material that I translate in parentheses.<sup>35</sup> This material is as follows:

—Edits to P1. The authors of the fifth stage have added three glosses to this *parashah*, specifying that the pronoun “them” refers to the Israelites, that the “Great River” is another name for the River Perath, and that the land bounded by the Moab desert, the Lebanon and the Perath is the Hethites' country.

—Edits to P6. To this *parashah*, the authors of the fifth stage have inserted a sentence in which Joshua relays Yahweh's command to

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34 These are the story about Caleb's gift of water pools to his daughter borrowed from the book of Judges, the mention of the tradition about Dan capturing the town of Leshem, and the integration of an alternative tradition about the twelve stones in the Jordan River.

35 It is possible that many of the comments and glosses that I assign to the fifth stage might have been added as part of the work on the second, third, or fourth compositional stages. However, because it is almost always impossible to judge which earlier stage a comment or gloss was most likely added, and because there is a plausible “setting in life” in the fifth compositional stage that explains the rationale for adding these comments and glosses, I have chosen to assign all this material to the fifth stage.

select twelve men, one man per tribe, in order to address what they saw as a problem in the narrative of P7,1. They have also added a comment about the overflowing banks of the Jordan, inserted three glosses relating to Yahweh's treaty chest, and added a gloss explaining that the Desert Steppe Sea is identical to the Salt Sea.

—Edits to P7,1. The authors of the fifth stage appear to have known of a variant tradition in which Joshua stood up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan rather than at the location of the first night's camp, and they have inserted a comment in the text in order to ensure this tradition was preserved in the authoritative record of Yahweh's people.

—Edit to P12. The anachronistic comment about the gold, silver, copper and iron from the plunder of Jericho being placed in Yahweh's temple could only have been added by the authors of the fifth stage. (It could not have been added by the authors of the second stage, as the priesthood at Mount Gerizim, which did not have a temple, is unlikely to have allowed such a comment to be added to the text.)

—Edit to P14. The authors of this stage glossed "the people" with the word "the military" to make clear to readers that the term should be understood to refer to Israel's fighting forces.

—Possible edit to P16. At some point in Joshua's transmission history, the location of the altar that Joshua built was changed from Mount Gerizim to Mount Ebal. This may have been done as part of the work on the fifth compositional stage, when the Samaritan cult had rejected the book of Joshua and ceased working on it. More likely, however, it was a "post-compositional" edit, made to the book of Joshua in the second or first century BCE, after the breakdown in relations between the cults in Samaria and Yehud during the Hasmonean era.

—Comment to P17. The authors of this stage have added a brief comment specifying which towns belonged to the Gibeonites.

—Comment to P22. The comment specifying in which part of the land each of the native peoples lived was likely added by the authors of the fifth stage.

—Edits to P23,2. In this *parashah*, the authors of the fifth stage likely were responsible for the clarification that Joshua exterminated the Anaqis from both Judah's and Israel's mountain country (and not



from Judah alone). The authors of this stage likely also added the comment about Anaqis remaining in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

—Edit to P23,3. In this *parashah*, the authors of the fifth stage have added a gloss on the Desert Steppe Sea.

—Edits to P23,4. The authors of this stage have added a comment to this *parashah* restating that Joshua gave the land captured from the Canaanite kings to the Israelites; they have also added a comment to remind the reader of the names of the native peoples of Canaan.

—The second half of P25 plus edits to the first half; edits to P26, P27, and P27,1. In these *parashot*, there are numerous comments and glosses that clarify relationships, provide definitions, explain the relevance of terms and references, and that provide additional information. I believe all these were added by the authors of the fifth stage. Many of the comments and glosses serve to harmonize the text in these *parashot* with stories and events appearing elsewhere in Joshua and in Numbers and Deuteronomy. I have translated all these comments and glosses in parentheses or as italicized text within brackets.

—P28. I believe the authors of the fifth stage composed this brief *parashah* to correct what they saw as an oversight in the earlier versions of Joshua—that there was no reason given as to why the Levites received no allotment with the other tribes. Their addition borrows language from Deuteronomy on the same topic in order to harmonize the treatment of this issue in both books.

—Edit to P28,1. The authors of the fifth stage have added a comment that clarifies the preceding comment which was added as part of the third compositional stage. The comment of the authors of the fifth stage addresses the question of how twelve tribes (nine-and-a-half plus two-and-a-half) could have received land when one tribe (the Levites) received no land. In their comment, they point out that in fact one tribe—the Josephites—consisted of two tribes. Their comment also clarifies that while the Levites didn't receive an allotment of land, they did receive towns to live in.

—Edit to P29. The authors of this stage have added a brief comment about Hebron's previous name and about the Anaqi hero named Arba.

—Second half of P30, plus edits to the first half of P30. I believe the authors of the fifth stage added the material in this *parashah* about the allotment given to Caleb, the capture of Qiryath-Sepher, and Caleb's gift of water pools to his daughter; they borrowed much of this mate-

rial from a passage in Judges (see note 30f above). Because the story in Judges involves the grant of land, the authors of Joshua's fifth stage likely wished to add that story to Joshua, so that the treatment of the division of the land in Joshua would be comprehensive. Separately, they have also added one brief comment and three glosses in the first half of the *parashah*.

—Edits to P31, P31,6, P31,8, P32, P32,1, P33, P34, and P36. In these *parashot*, the authors of the fifth stage have added various clarifying glosses and comments, all of which I have translated in parentheses or as italicized text within brackets. The most substantial of these edits is the comment in P32,1 stating that the Judahites were unable to drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem.

—Second paragraph of P34. The authors of the fifth stage have added the material about Tzelophehad's daughters in order to harmonize Joshua with Numbers and to show that the promises made to Tzelophehad's daughters by Moses were indeed fulfilled by Joshua in the allotment of the land. (See my discussion of the complicated composition history of P34 in note 34b above.)

—Correction to P42. The authors of the fifth stage have corrected the error "Judah" with the insertion of "the Jordan," but they have not removed the original error out of respect for the authority of the ancient text. (See note 42a above.)

—Edit to P43. The brief story about the Danites' capture and occupation of Leshem was likely added by the authors of the fifth stage.

—Edit to P44. The authors of this stage have added a gloss to the name Arba's Village.

—All of P47 except the first sentence; edits to P47,9 and to P47,10. The authors of the fifth stage have added all the material in P47 except the first sentence. This material also has a number of brief comments and glosses; these comments and glosses, in my opinion, reflect changes made in later editions of the fifth stage. In P47,9 and P47,10, the authors of this stage have added a couple of glosses that I have translated in parentheses.

—Edits to P48. I believe the authors of the fifth stage added the comment at the end of Joshua's speech that exhorts the eastern tribes to love Yahweh and to follow his commandments. The comment alludes to material from Deuteronomy that I date to the Persian period. See note 48g above.

—Edits to P50 - P52. In these *parashot* the authors of the fifth stage have added the harmonizing references to “half of the tribe of Manasseh.” On these additions, see my comments about these *parashot* in the discussion of the fourth compositional stage above.

—Edits to P53. I believe that the authors of the fifth stage have inserted a comment about the native peoples who remain with the Israelites; they have also added the brief passage warning against marriage alliances with foreigners. See notes 53g, 53m and 53n above.

—Edit to P54 and to P55. The authors of the fifth stage have inserted into each of these *parashot* a short clarifying comment about the Amorites.

# Schema for the composition history of Joshua

First Stage [DtrH] (580s – 570s BCE)	Second Stage [Zion] (ca. 500 – ca. 400 BCE)	Third Stage [Gerizim] (ca. 500 – ca. 400 BCE)	Fourth Stage [Aharonides] (ca. 400 – ca. 350 BCE)	Fifth Stage [Prophets] (ca. 350 – ca. 250 BCE)
P1 – P7,2	Edit to P4,1; edit to P5	Edit to P3 and to P7,1		Edits to P1, to P6, and to P7,1
	P8			
P9	P10 – P11			
P11,1 – P15		P16 (all but end)		Edits to P12; edit to P14; possible edit to P16
End of P16; core of P17	Edit to P17; middle of P17	plus final sentence		P17 comment
P18 – P23,2		P23,3		P22 comment; P23,2 edits; edit to P23,3
P23,4 – P24,31				P23,4 edits
	1 <sup>st</sup> half of P25; P26 – P27	Edit to P25; P27,1		2 <sup>nd</sup> half of P25 plus edits; edits to P26, P27, and P27,1; all of P28
Core of P28,1	Edit to P28,1	Edit to P28,1		Edit to P28,1
P29	Movement of P29; edit to P29			Edit to P29
1 <sup>st</sup> half of P30				2 <sup>nd</sup> half of P30, plus edits to 1 <sup>st</sup> half of P30
P31 – P33				Edits to P31, P31,6, P31,8, P32, P32,1 and P33
		1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph of P34		2 <sup>nd</sup> paragraph of P34, plus edits to P34
2 <sup>nd</sup> half of P34		P34,1 – P35		
P36 – P43		Edits to P38, P39, P40, P41, P42, and P43		Edit to P36; correction to P42; edit to P43

First Stage [DtutH] (580s – 570s BCE)	Second Stage [Zion] (ca. 500 – ca. 400 BCE)	Third Stage [Gerizim] (ca. 500 – ca. 400 BCE)	Fourth Stage [Aharonides] (ca. 400 – ca. 350 BCE)	Fifth Stage [Prophets] (ca. 350 – ca. 250 BCE)
1 <sup>st</sup> half of P43,1		2 <sup>nd</sup> half of P43,1		
P44		Additions to P44		Edit to P44
	P45 – P47,10	Contributions to P45, P46,1, P47,3 – P47,5 and possibly elsewhere in P46 – P47,10		All of P47 except the first sentence; edit to P47,9; and edit to P47,10
P47,11 – P48		P48 edit (Menashsheh)		Edit to P48
		P49		
			P50 – P52	Edits to P50 – P52
P53				P53 edits
		P54 – P56		Edit to P54 and to P55
	P57	Edit to P57 (Yoseph)	Edit to P57 (Pinyehas)	

